



# JESUS FOR JEWS

EDWARD HOLTON JAMES

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[A HISTORY]

BY

EDWARD HOLTON JAMES  
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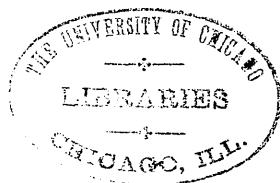
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## JESUS FOR JEWS



# I

## WHO WAS JESUS?

THIS book is in the nature of a biography, not of Jesus, but of the author. I thought at first of writing the book in the correctly conventional and distant manner of many authors, leaving out personal experiences, beliefs and opinions as much as possible; but after turning the matter over, the conclusion was reached that the reader would receive a more intimate explanation of what I have on my mind if the book were written somewhat in the style of a personal narrative, thus giving to the reader what I know—if anything—and how I came to know it.

All men have some kind of a religion. Whatever is most sacred to a man—a man's inner light—that is his religion. In my case, Jesus has always been the central figure—not so much the person of Jesus as what he was standing for. From an early age, this man appealed powerfully to my imagination, and I have spent a large part of my life trying to obtain perfectly truthful information about him.

In the beginning, I could see what Jesus was standing for only in a very vague manner. The somewhat hackneyed explanations about him which I often heard in church soon lost their freshness. As I grew older, I saw, or thought I saw, things in a clearer light, but that was after I gave up going to church. I saw gradually that there was a false Jesus and a true Jesus, and I became particularly interested in the latter. Religion has consisted for me in finding out, always more definitely, what Jesus was standing for. Had I believed that by the force of praying I should be able to find out some day what Jesus was standing for, I should be praying up to this day. But I gave up praying about the year 1898. I am glad, however, for the sake of memory

and other reasons, that when I was about the age of four my mother taught me how to pray.

From about the time of Jerome and Augustine, history became divided into two sections, profane history and sacred history. This division produced a false Jesus.

To find out anything in a really satisfactory way about this subject we must deal with certain words which were in use nineteen centuries ago. At that time they palpitated with meaning. Today they may be fossils. Pure carbon in a liquid state will by a process sufficiently slow become a diamond. It may take as long a time as that to form a word and the meaning of it. Every time man puts his thought on a word, the thought, like a chisel, makes the meaning of the word sharper. Some words cut like diamonds. Such words are, like diamonds, the rarest and most precious of gems. Just as the meaning of a word takes a long time to form, it may also take a long time to crumble away. We may see in stratified rock the perfect impression of a leaf buried ages ago. The rock hardened, the leaf perished, but the form of the leaf, to every vein, remained. It is so with ancient words. The form remains, but the meaning, the life, is gone. We are presented with a dead shell.

We have four gospels, and a few other writings, about Jesus. We have lost the ancient meaning of many of the words, the words of great, controlling importance. We are like persons in a ship, without chart or compass. Some of us wish to steer in one way, some in another. We know that we are in the ship, but we do not know where the ship is.

Jerome and Augustine divided history into sacred and profane history and they did this in the interests of piety, but they caused a lot of trouble for their descendants. After them followed dark ages and middle ages and ages of historical perversion and ages of theological soft soap, and now we know that we are in the ship of salvation, but we do not know where the ship is.

Thirty-two centuries after Pharaoh forced the Jews in Egypt to make bricks without straw, nineteen centuries after Pilate put Jesus to death in Jerusalem, Adolf Hitler is seeking to reduce the Jews in Germany to the condition of pariahs. We do not know where the ship is, and neither does Hitler.

The Jew and his religion are essential to the Christian and his religion. The separation of these two religions is another factor which has produced the false Jesus. Human unity will never be reached by constantly making divisions.

We are looking, therefore, for a buried truth. But a truth that has been buried under the *débris* of nineteen centuries is not going to be found out except by those who wish to find it out with a wish that has an almighty strength and will back of it.

Tons of books are published about Jesus. Booksellers tell me that the trade along this line has fallen off a little of late, on account of depression, but the topic is still "going strong." Albert C. Dieffenbach remarks in the *Boston Transcript* that most writers see Jesus the way they wish to see him. That is the reason that these books, characterized by "wishful thinking" (a phrase coined by some nice observer of modern thought phenomena) are generally unsatisfactory. Some are good and helpful, undoubtedly. Others are biased by piety, sentimentalism, sectarianism or some other pigment which makes not a picture but a blur. One notable book which has had a wide circulation and been undoubtedly helpful to thousands of people, pretends to have found the "key to the scriptures." If such a claim is not conspicuous for modesty, it seems to proceed from an impression that the scriptures are a kind of Yale lock which can only be opened with one particular kind of a key. The laborious, non-prophetic, non-oracular, level-headed method is the best one to employ for finding any of the many keys needed to explain the scriptures. The more keys we find the better, in the general interest of knowledge, science and religion.

The people are rare who have a passion for looking at a question objectively, whether it be the question of Jesus or any



other. They are many who are merely reflectors of what they suppose the rest of the people around them are thinking. But always there is a certain ripple going on underneath the surface, and always in one direction, and always in the domain of the people's religion. Religion, strange to say, is always on the move. Now, what is going on today is that some religious-minded people are beginning to awaken to the fact that they have been cheated, and they are beginning to have a thirst for knowledge. The importance of history is dawning on them. What they are asking for is religion plus history. The quest for the historical Jesus is perhaps the most cheering sign of life in modern Christianity. Can anything be found out? Jesus said: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you." Therefore, let us begin to knock. The piety which once drew a circle around sacred history and said: "Don't touch, don't investigate," has pretty well evaporated. We can have new ideas and theories about Jesus today without being put in prison on that account, and anyone trying to revive that old-fashioned piety would be guilty of nothing short of profanity. The day for history is coming, and faith in the reality of history, in the infallibility of history—not sacred history, nor profane history, but just history—may become the new faith and the new religion which will help us to steer a decent course into the future. There are laws at work which make it impossible for us to disengage ourselves completely from Jesus and what he stood for. But the true Jesus, when he is found, will be the Jesus of history, not the Jesus of theology.

One word further in explanation of the plan and title of this book. The plan is along the factual-historical lines rather than the religious-devotional lines. It aims to reach the ear of the so-called unbelievers. Confidence is felt that unbelievers might have a certain respect for Jesus, if they could learn something about him. Apart from unbelievers, many Christians underestimate the importance of finding out anything. Some believe nothing new can be found out. Others do not want to find out anything new. There are probably types who will say that they

know all about Jesus and do not care to learn anything further on the subject. They may have regularly gone to church, regularly voted the Republican ticket, regularly upheld law and order, regularly fought down all forms of radicalism, and regularly cleaned daily the outside of the platter and kept all the commandments, and given largely perhaps to spread the gospel among the heathen, and they are comfortably sure of salvation. But if these types or specimens will not listen, we can leave them to one side and go to the unbelievers. An unbeliever once said to me: "There is no happiness in neglecting the truth so far as we know of the truth." Whatever the thing is that the unbeliever refuses to believe in, it certainly is not the truth. The radical, the infidel, always has a holy regard for the truth. The motto of the theosophists is that there is no religion higher than truth. Scientists go in heavily for truth. Truth, therefore, seems to be generally accepted as holy. If we find ourselves in the presence of people who do not wish to hear the truth we can remember the words of one who found himself in exactly the same situation: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs."

The plan is further to bring Jesus, as a champion of ideas, into relation to modern thought. The unbelievers have a large share in the making of modern thought—the Jew, the agnostic, the infidel, the Hindu, the Mohammedan; in a word, all those who are not officially tied up to the Christian religion. We should feel particularly flattered if we could get a hearing from some eminent members of the Society of the Godless in Moscow. The spirit of the book is simply to follow out this line of impartiality, freedom from any *parti pris*, with a reverence which is due to all things real and truthful, and due to all men and women who have unselfishly suffered, or paid a price, in struggling to promote the welfare of their fellow-men.

"Knock and it shall be opened unto you." Here is the place where a new reverence begins, a reverence which consists not so much in praying as in knocking. We must learn how to knock and where to knock. We must avoid the weakness of

those people who have never learned how to knock, or how to do anything else, on a system. It all comes down to a question of living in a world with a soul or living in a world without a soul. If we want religion we must get it from a pure source, and we must go to the fountain-head from which all true religion springs, which is certainly a mysterious region buried deep, deep, deep within our natures. We have been told to pattern ourselves after Jesus. Who was Jesus? The faith of Christianity was, and is, that he was a divine person. But we cannot pattern ourselves after a divine person. We can only pattern ourselves after a serious person. Seriousness may be carried to such an extent that those who have it can cause everything useless and outworn to crack around them. The thing called seriousness is the capacity of a man for bringing into full play his best powers, a constant concentration and action on the thing deepest within him, a devotion to his inner light, which is the real yardstick of human character. It has often happened in history that a man who had that kind of endless devotion appeared, to the comprehension of the vulgar, clouded as it is by a gross alloy of materialism, as a being miraculous, superhuman, divine.

By learning how to stick to good things because they are good, not because they are popular or polite or respectable, we learn how to get out of the baneful habit of thinking in ruts, which is such a marked characteristic of the human race at its worst, not at its best. The Bible says that where there is no vision the people perish. A shoddy, materialistic society, state-enthralled, state-obsessed, swaying constantly between the mob of the rich and the mob of the poor, is a society which is sunk in a kind of gilded hell, which the newspapers politely call "depression." It is an *impasse* in which money has been piled up and vision lost, in which no prophet and no prophecy appear on the horizon. Everybody is trying to get out of the depression, but so long as men kick against the eternal laws of things, the words apply of the man who said, "You can't win." Only

when men search for good and follow it because it is good will the depression lift and the grace of heaven descend upon them.

A disgust, or hopelessness, for human society, an impatience with the stupidity of the herd, indicate something that is wrong and ungracious within us. The eternal laws are plain before us, and if we have not the wit to explain them to our fellow-men the best plan is to seek the friendship of the stars, the fields, the birds, the quiet wood, and wait there, with those friends, until we get some glint of that vision for which every man is looking.

## II

### JESUS OF THE SWORD

"I come to bring not peace, but a sword."

THERE is in the ancient city of Auxerre, in France, on the highway between Paris and Geneva, a beautiful old cathedral which has in it a stained-glass window representing Joan of Arc, marching to the relief of Orleans. Joan, clad in armor, is mounted on her horse, and the tip of her sword is raised toward heaven. Behind her is her army. Before her are the walls of Orleans, and on top of the walls the English invaders are looking down with contempt upon a woman who pretends to be a soldier. Beneath the picture are the words of Joan, addressed to the invaders:

"I am sent here by God, king of heaven, to kick you out of all France."

It all depends on how the sword is used. Napoleon used the sword. After he had conquered almost all Europe with the sword it came about that he accepted the crown of an emperor. The Pope advanced to put the crown on Napoleon's head, but Napoleon took the crown out of the Pope's hands and proudly placed it on his own head. It so happened that at the same time over in Vienna there was living a certain Beethoven. This man was a composer of music, and he was to music what blind Homer was to poetry. Beethoven was not blind, but deaf, so deaf that he could not hear with his ears the music which he heard in his soul. He was a republican in principle, opposed to monarchy and feudalism, and he had watched with admiration the rise of Napoleon, child of the French Revolution, as a hero sent from somewhere to deliver Europe from the shackles of feudalism.

He had composed a symphony and called it the "Heroica," and dedicated it to Napoleon. But what could any emperor have to do with delivering the people from feudalism? On the day when the news came that Napoleon had proclaimed himself an emperor, Beethoven tore from his symphony the dedication he had made and dashed it to the ground in disgust.

It all depends on what is back of the sword. Back of the sword of Joan, the fighter, was faith in God as king of heaven. Joan's heroism ran out from the point of her sword. Back of the sword of Napoleon was a vulgar pride, a lust for power, a greed for money.

"Peace on earth, good will to men" is the most sublime goal which has ever been set before the eyes of men, but it is a goal which will never be reached except by some kind of hard fighting. A man may choose his own sword, and the temper and purpose of the sword which he chooses is only a reflection of his own temper and purpose. From one point of view, the true Christian is always a fighter. He is a Saint Michael, or a Saint George who goes forth to slay a dragon. He fights as long as his faith lasts. When his faith dries up, he stops fighting.

Here we are dealing with the heroic quality that sometimes crops out in human nature. Joan had it. Beethoven had it. Did Jesus have it? That is one thing to find out. Today people think that the world is guided by politics. The world is guided by politics, but badly. That is the trouble. Politics are often rotten. Why try to reform the world on a rotten basis? A good man who thinks to reform the world by politics, but who is constantly being outvoted by ten rotten men, is merely wasting his time. The heroic quality is a flower which does not grow in the muck of politics. Occasionally a hero comes on the stage and gives politics a knock-out blow and succeeds in shaping history. Napoleon hated all people who had ideas, and drove all who had any, like Madame de Staël, out from Paris. Yet anybody is a fool who cannot see that the history of man has been more affected by the shock of ideas than by the shock

of cannon. The people who today are opposed to war should consider this fact. Many pacifists suppose that by politics, by diplomatic pacts, by the passing of laws and the signing of treaties, the "institution of war," as they call it, can be abolished. This is a pipe-dream. The pacifists need to get back to religion. Putting an end to war will never be accomplished by handing the job over to politicians. Pacifists must invent the ideas which can shock the cannon into silence. Politicians, whether they be Napoleons, Hitlers or Tammany chiefs, do not make a living out of ideas.

Now, we must come down to the real subject of this book, Jesus for Unbelievers. I have kept away from it as long as possible, because it is a hard and slippery subject to tackle. Perhaps a good way for making a start will be to set out here the best condensed statement I have come across of what Christianity is and how it began. With that before us, we shall know just where we are, or just where we are not, and just what we have to look for and find to get where we want to be.

The statement is contained in a "History of the Church," in French, by David and Lorette, which is or was used as a textbook in the Catholic schools of France. The little book is very dear to me for I picked it up twenty-four years ago, in Lyons, in connection with a visit I made to a certain hole in that city where, in the year 177 A.D., the good, wise and kind Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, put to death a batch of Christians under horrible torture. The statement is made up chiefly of quotations from the distinguished French divine, Bossuet, and here it is:

In the fulness of time, God sent his Son to the earth for the purpose of establishing the Kingdom, in the house of David, in a more lofty manner than the carnal-minded Jews could understand it, and for the purpose of preaching the doctrine which God had resolved to proclaim to the whole universe. Born of a Virgin in Bethlehem, he grew up in Nazareth and received the baptism of the Precursor. He then preached in Galilee the Kingdom of Heaven, prophesied long before by the

Prophets. Miraculously helpful to the sick, full of pity for the sinners, whose true doctor he was, he made men feel an authority and a kindness such as had never appeared except in his person. He drew upon himself the hatred of the Pharisees and the priests, who reproached him for his attitude towards the Law, and the traditions, and for his attitude towards people of bad reputation. The people soon became disappointed in his promise of a Kingdom of God which failed to bring about the independence of Israel. His enemies led him to an infamous punishment. His disciples abandoned him. One of them betrayed him. The most zealous one among them denied him three times. He was handed over as a disturber of the peace and a false Messiah to the Roman authority. Jesus, master of his own life and of all things, voluntarily gave himself up to the fury of the wicked, and offered the sacrifice which was destined to be an expiation for the human race.

To the statement is added the *Nihil Obstat* and the *Imprimatur* of Catholic authority.

I view such a statement with deepest respect, for I know all the blood that was shed for it, and I know all the millions of hearts that have clung to it through the ages. It represents with perfect accuracy the views of one hundred per cent of all the Catholics, one hundred per cent of all those in the Greek Orthodox Church and eighty-five per cent of all Protestants, living in the world today.

If I may be free to criticize Dr. Bossuet, I will do so only in one respect. I cannot at all see Jesus, from this picture. Dr. Bossuet's words completely prevent me from seeing Jesus. Something was in the picture which Dr. Bossuet, unbeknown to himself, has left out. The true story is not there.

Peter, the apostle referred to as having denied Jesus three times, was put to death in Rome. Why should Peter be put to death in Rome? There were neither Pharisees nor Jewish priests in Rome. The Pharisees and priests who hated Jesus were in Jerusalem. Paul, who said that he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," was also put to death in Rome. Why were these men put to death in Rome? We all



know, and Dr. Bossuet knew. Because they were followers of Jesus.

Dr. Bossuet says that Jesus was put to death because of his attitude towards the Mosaic Law. Peter and Paul could not have been put to death in Rome because of their attitude towards the Mosaic Law, because the Romans in Rome cared nothing about the Mosaic Law. They abominated the Jews and all their works.

There is in Rome, on the Appian Way, a chapel called Quo Vadis. The story is that Peter, not having the courage to face the martyrdom which he saw impending, was running away from Rome on the Appian Way. In the middle of the way, at the point where this chapel now stands, he saw a vision of Jesus, coming from the opposite direction. Peter said to Jesus, "Whither goest thou, master?" (*Quo vadis, domine*) and Jesus answered, "I am going to Rome to be crucified." Courage came back to Peter. He returned to Rome and gave his life in Nero's amphitheater.

In the logic of that situation, what earthly reason could Jesus have had in going to Rome to be crucified, since his enemies had been Pharisees in Jerusalem, and since his offence had been against the Law of Moses and the tradition of the Jews? Something very important was in the picture, which Dr. Bossuet has left out.

The logic of that situation is plain and unavoidable. It is that whatever the offence was for which Jesus suffered in Jerusalem, it was an offence for which he would have been legally and inevitably crucified in Rome.

I have nothing against Dr. Bossuet's statement that Jesus was born of a Virgin. Born of Virgin or not makes little difference to me. I am looking for the "old, old story," and the old, old story is not there. I know that there is many a Christian who wants the old, old story, and who would go through suffering to get it. My purpose is to reach these, to focus their thought, and make them think on the greatest problem which they ever

have had, or ever will have, to face. It is the supreme choice which is given us, to make ourselves one with the Eternal Greatness, or to disappear into nothingness.

See Jesus when he went up to Jerusalem! That was the time when he really began to shoot off all his guns. "Ye vipers! Ye children of hell!" One can hear those guns booming still. Let us find that man.

I began this search when I was a young man, living in Seattle, practicing law. The gospels seemed to possess a secret. The secret was a legal secret. I was bothered by the legality of the manner in which Jesus was put to death. The gospels inferred that the affair was perfectly legal. None of the gospels questions the legality. They do not raise that point. They are in complete unity on that point. But the way they explain the affair is nothing but a jumble. I saw that I would have to get a key to unlock the secret, and I saw that I would have to find the key outside the gospels. That meant of course studying old documents, ruins and inscriptions of the Roman era. That meant, of course, archæology. So I rolled up my sleeves for archæology. But there was no archæology in Seattle—nothing but one old Indian totem pole.

I found myself later in France, where I lived seven years. France is a Catholic country and the Catholics do not, as a rule, pay as much attention to the Bible as do the Protestants. But France is in many ways (and particularly the region along the Rhone, southward from Lyons) the very cradle of Christianity. On that soil the great battle for the faith was fought.

If the hatred against Jesus emanated from Jewish priests, as Dr. Bossuet affirmed, where was the link to explain why this hatred was almost immediately switched away from the Jews and transferred to the Romans? The telegraph had not been invented in those days. I was looking for that link. Why should the Romans pour out their wrath upon Peter and Paul because of some petty dispute over theology among a politically insignificant and socially despised race of conquered Jews, living

in a remote corner of the Empire? What seemed plain was that the venom against Jesus was shared equally by Jews and Romans, or better, by the Romans and some Jews. The Jewish priests and the Romans had a common cause, whatever that common cause was, and this cause was no theological squabble.

One evening by the sea, in old Vendée, I had some kind of an experience. I heard a voice, or something of that kind, which said: "Your question is easy to answer. Those priests in Jerusalem belonged to the Romans."

I do not put much stock in voices of that kind, but if it was true, as the voice said, that the priests belonged to the Romans, then *how* did they belong to the Romans? The voice did not answer this question. In fact, I did not ask the question because, to tell the truth, I was a little dazed. Still, the voice was clear and distinct, and it had helped me a little. It was certainly interesting to know that the Jewish priests had belonged to the Romans. Nobody else seemed to know it, certainly not Dr. Bossuet.

When voices come like that, and you cannot see where the voice is coming from—the sun setting tranquilly over the sea and nothing floating in the air or looking out from the bushes that was not strictly according to nature—it is always well to take whatever is said with a certain reserve. I took that attitude, being a lawyer. I know about evidence and what you have to do to get things proved in law courts. Perhaps I had got a new slant on the problem, handed out free.

I went back to Paris and began to find out all I could about Pilate, Caiaphas and Co. I found that they both had bad records. That was encouraging. The smell of Caiaphas's record, particularly, was not agreeable.

I then went down to Nîmes, in southern France, with just a sneaking hope that I might get the voice again. It was just the time when Marconi was playing around with wireless, near where I was.

In Nîmes I did not get another wireless, but I got a psychic

shock. That city is rich in the ruins of the Romans. I came in contact with two sermons in stone in a very quick way, so quick indeed that I had to take a long rest after finding them.

But before telling the double shock I got in Nîmes, let us make a visit to the Passion Play in the charming old town of Oberammergau.

We must keep both sides of this picture constantly before us. What one sees at Oberammergau, on the stage, is a conclave of elderly Jewish gentlemen, learned doctors and pundits of the Mosaic Law, concerned uniquely with Jewish exegesis and ritual. Christ, a self-conscious and somewhat insipid personage, with long hair, pale face, and silky beard, beautifully curled, is confronted by his theological enemies, the upholders of Jewish orthodoxy, before the judgment seat of an unconcerned and burly Pilate, the deliverer of steady Roman justice.

At Nîmes the picture was different—a Roman amphitheater, the exact replica of the world in which Jesus lived. That amphitheater is swarming with the life of those days. First one sees the lions, and somebody being chewed up by the lions. Then one looks at the audience (all having a good time), which is arranged in galleries. The top gallery is the biggest, and accommodates all the slaves, a vast number of them. The next tier lower down is occupied by the soldiers, wearing the uniform of the Roman army. Beneath them sit the free proletariat, properly speaking. Beneath these come the tradesmen, the “plebs,” and all others who stand between the miserable proletariat and the gilded aristocracy. The lowest row of seats are those of the greatest privilege, and here sit the aristocracy, clad in “purple and fine linen,” consisting of the priests, the Roman knights and senators. That is, in the rough, the way in which the people were divided up in Jerusalem. Whatever existed in one part of the Empire existed everywhere else.

I was particularly interested in the seats reserved for the priests, because it accorded exactly with the description given by Jesus, when he spoke of the priests loving the “chief seats”

in the synagogues. By the Roman law, the privilege of occupying the front or chief seats applied to all public places where it was allowable for the people to congregate, such as circuses, synagogues, theaters and arenas. Such was the society in which Jesus was living and it was suffering badly from the disease known as classitis.

But what was at the top of this magnificent human mausoleum? At the bottom was undoubtedly socialism, communism or some other kind of discontent, and I was beginning to see how Christianity would work in a crowd like that, and I was beginning to see how the priests in Jerusalem "belonged to the Romans." They said to Pilate: "If you let this fellow go, you are not Cæsar's friend." Obviously, the priests were friends of Cæsar.

The second sermon in stone was on some old gates which were built by the emperor, Augustus Cæsar. The inscription over the gates was in Latin, which did not bother me, as I read Latin readily.

"The emperor, Cæsar Augustus, Son of God, consul for the eleventh time, tribune for the eighth time, has given these gates and these walls to the colony of Nîmes."

Here we are getting into the question about God. The question about God is a burning question. It is the question which today in the United States, in the liberal fold, is stirring up the humanists to so much useful activity. Ingersoll, the atheist, spent more time thinking about God than most Christians or Mohammedans. Colonel Bob Ingersoll said that "an honest God is the noblest work of man." When I looked at the gates in Nîmes, I asked myself the question: "Was the emperor Augustus the son of an honest God?" If that were so, I could have considerable respect for him, particularly as our month of August is named after him. But if Augustus was trotting out God for political reasons, it would be all right because it would afford us the amusement of looking at a piece of political horseplay.

I felt a little resentment against Augustus, however, because

I had been taught in Sunday School that Jesus was the Son of God, and one can never shake off everything which one has learned in childhood. In fact, I am a little sorry for everybody who was not taught in childhood that Jesus was the Son of God. They have missed something in life. Ingersoll was taught this, his father having been a minister of the gospel, and that is why Ingersoll knew, fairly well, what he was talking about. It is a good thing for the world, on the whole, that so many people have been taught that Jesus was the Son of God. We owe something to Dr. Bossuet and to the Catholic Church for keeping it fresh in our minds, over so many years, that Jesus was the Son of God. Otherwise, in all probability, both God and Jesus would have been forgotten, because most men have short memories.

It is very important, in discussing God, to determine who it is that is controlling God. In Russia we know that up to very recent times the Tzars controlled God. They used God as a means for controlling the people. The Tzar was himself clothed with divinity, and the Russian word which applied to the Tzar's divine quality was, if I remember correctly, *bojestveni*. At the time we are dealing with, Augustus was controlling God. He was at the head of the Roman Empire, and he controlled everything, God included. The Bible says that God made man in his own image. But that is not the way in which Augustus worked. The latter had not found the Bible. Augustus made God in his own image, and we seem to honor Augustus because, although he did not find the Bible, we are dedicating the month of August to his august memory. Perhaps Augustus, in claiming to be the Son of God, was right and Jesus was wrong. But we must be fair to Jesus. He was battling against terrible odds. Like other men, he made his own image of God, and what we hold here is that he had a perfect right to do it. Where does "right" come from? It comes from inside. Socrates was put to death in Athens as the result of some disagreement about God. Dr. Dieffenbach, in the *Boston Transcript*, says: "One finds in religious history no great person who has been equiv-

ocal." Well said, Dr. Dieffenbach. That takes in Socrates and Jesus.

What Jesus was saying to the common people, or the uncommon people, was this: "God is not an emperor. God is a spirit." He was saying that to a world (chief priests included) that was hired to believe that God was an emperor. Pompey, Vespasian and Titus had the Jews beaten in the matter of battering rams and catapults, but when it came to discussing God, Jesus knew how to get on top of a mountain and talk down to Cæsar.

Now, here is Lesson Number One. Every new conception about God which is so deep-cutting as to constitute a lasting cleavage from all old conceptions, draws with it political and social consequences which make it necessary for man to reconstruct his political and social institutions. The old institutions must go, because "men do not put new wine into old bottles." Atheists deny God, that is to say, they deny a deity whose name is God. But to deny a deity whose name is God is not the same thing as denying the existence of a creative power, a creative power that has no name and can have no name. It is not the same as denying the existence of a life-giving power. The atheist is denying a dogma, not a reality. I have never met an atheist who made the claim that he had created himself or anybody else. Man's conception of deity has been his guiding star. He thinks over the mystery that created him and that gives him life, and he constructs a deity. This comes as the inevitable product of all the thinking force he has. His conception of deity at any stage in his history is a speedometer which marks the mileage of a journey he is making towards a great light. When he gets a new conception of the creative power he pegs up his political and social arrangements.

The Fundamentalist of today accepts the divinity of Christ one hundred per cent. The Catholic accepts it one hundred per cent, and then some. In the light of Lesson Number One, both are right, for the day in which they live. They are right

for yesterday and today, but how about tomorrow? When our time comes, we gather up what we have and pass on. What do we leave behind us? A stepping stone for somebody else—that is all. The Unitarian and the freethinker deny the divinity of Christ, but up to date they have found nothing to put in its place. Their philosophy is a little too negative and cold. Trying to find a new religion in a Unitarian church is like fishing through the ice in winter. The Unitarians are the “light of the world,” but to some extent they are hiding their light under a bushel. If Jesus were not divine, the Unitarians must logically explain how it came about that so many millions of people could be convinced that he was divine.

How about the Jews? Christians have reproached the Jews because they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. The reproach is partly fair and partly unfair. It is fair in the sense that any intelligent person, in those days, Jew or Gentile, ought to have accepted Jesus as the Messiah. That was the only thing for a decent person to do. It was a question of saving your skin or losing it. The Jews were no better and no worse, in respect of personal courage, than anybody else. Many of the Jews did accept him, but not as Jews. The reproach is unfair in the sense that it would put on the Jews of that time, as an organized political and religious polity, the responsibility of accepting the dogma that Jesus was the Messiah. This was impossible. Anybody who knows anything about the Jews in that time knows that the Romans had utterly destroyed the Jews as a political and religious polity. The people who do not know this should begin to inform themselves, and not start in to argue from ignorance. If a man forms his own God—which is what he has been doing ever since the days of the cave man—if a man chooses his own God, why does that not apply to his choosing his own Messiah? There is a difference between choosing God and inheriting God. It is said that the Prophets prophesied the coming of the Messiah. Very good. Why not? But the Prophets did not prophesy the coming of Jesus as the Messiah.



I have not been able to find Jesus referred to in the Prophets. We can prophesy anything we like, and anybody coming after us is free to fulfill anything which we have prophesied, or which they think we have prophesied. There is nothing mysterious about it.

The choosing of a Messiah in Jerusalem was a personal affair, not a national affair, because, as we have said, Israel, as an organized nation, had been destroyed. Not one thing was left to them except the Bible. Their high priest was the puppet, the hired man of the Romans. The sanhedrin was a piece of Roman clockwork organized in the first instance by the Roman Pompey. There was nothing Jewish about it. If they had accepted Jesus as their national Messiah, which they could not do, no later Christian in Greece or Rome would have had anything to do with him. In fact, there would have been no Christianity. Not many, but some of the Jews, at that time were satisfied with Roman rule. We are told all we want to know about them in the gospels. Roman rule was making them rich, giving them front seats, purple and fine linen, and various other honors. The majority of the Jews, on the other hand, hated the Romans and were looking for deliverance of a political nature. They were looking, as we all know, in some vague and superstitious way, for some kind of a Messiah, probably somebody on the size of Moses. But it is not in the least likely that these people were looking for a pacifist Messiah. What they hoped for was a military personage. A man cannot accept what his soul is not capable of understanding, no matter to what race he belongs. How could the nationalist Jews accept as a Messiah a man who was only a poor, penniless tramp of an internationalist? Military Messiahs did rise up and lead the Jews to war against Rome, but their efforts for the Jews ended in nothing except a misery more hellish than what they had known before. The majority of the Jews perhaps failed to have the courage to follow the penniless tramp. The majority of the Jews perhaps failed to understand the penniless tramp. What

nation understands him today? Not long ago a book was written on the subject: "The man nobody knows." Another book could be written on the subject: "The man nobody wants to know." The majority of the Jews followed military Messiahs who led them nowhere. The penniless tramp was the only one who got results.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Six hours before, he had said:

And he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

Why did Jesus shift his ground? Why did he say one thing in the upper room and another thing in the Garden of Gethsemane? Did he alter his philosophy according to circumstances? Assume that he did. What difference does it make? We judge men not by what they say, but by what they do. Even when under arrest in the Garden, even afterwards, at the tragic moment, he had a chance to retract, recant, back down, apologize, surrender, sell out. He refused the chance, he flung it to the winds, he wielded his own sword to the end, and by his decision the world has judged him.

### III

## JESUS AND VICTOR BERGER

JESUS and Victor Berger were Jews. Hitler would not approve of either of them. Berger came from Austria, I do not remember when, probably in the eighties, and settled in Milwaukee. That city was a center for Germans. The best Germans came out of Germany and went straight to Milwaukee. A few got stranded in Chicago. I knew Berger in 1897. I was learning how to be a reporter on the *Milwaukee Sentinel* and Berger was running a socialist paper called the *Social-Democrat*. Victor, as we called him, was a Marxian and an atheist. I was at that time badly bitten with socialism myself. In the house where he lived, Victor had constructed a wonderful system of index drawers that looked like a honeycomb, and these drawers contained a vast assortment of newspaper clippings all on the subject of Marxian socialism. He would pull out a drawer, take out a clipping, screw his eyeglasses firmly down over the bridge of his nose, and then start in to explain to me the true Marxian orthodoxy, shaking the clipping at me all the time. He explained how, when socialism came, "goods" were going to get into the hands of everybody "according to their needs." I never completely understood the process, but I was in favor of it. Socialism, or "changing the system," was our daily work, our heavy diet, our public activity, but on Sunday afternoons, Victor, Fred Heath, I and a few other comrades would get together in some private parlor and enjoy a pudding of atheism. That was our Sunday School. Victor made me feel that if I did not agree with him I would be pushed out of the way. The push came always before the words. If I recollect rightly the push always came from the elbow. He tried to push me into atheism

and he almost got me in. He was a man with a big punch and a big heart. He taught me how to be open-minded, for which I liked him and shall never forget him. Years afterwards, when he was a member of Congress, at a time when I found myself in some diplomatic difficulty with a foreign country, a matter that got into the newspapers, I received a telegram from Victor, sent from Washington, which said: "It is my duty to help you. What can I do?" He had that rare faith which can sometimes save a man in politics from being equivocal. When he died, fifty thousand people attended his funeral, a tribute to an honest man and to what he did for the honest politics of the city of Milwaukee.

Does a man think? Some people think they think. I would say to them, as a good rule to follow in order to avoid making any mistake: "After breakfast, on Sunday morning, before going to church, sit down in a quiet corner and ask yourself this question: What am I going to do with my brain?" Anybody who does this, sooner or later will become intelligent. It requires courage, and self-confidence, because as a person gets to be intelligent he is sure to be looked upon with suspicion by those around him. I heard a man say recently: "An intelligent person is a freak born ahead of his time."

Berger was an atheist, and Jesus, insofar as he denied the official God of his day, was, legally speaking, also an atheist. When his immediate followers were put to death in Rome, the charge against them was that of atheism. The vital question is not "What you believe," but "Can you believe?" Jesus said: "Man does not live by bread alone." All socialists, communists and materialists will admit this. Man lives by his belief. That is what the socialists, communists and materialists live by. We all know that a tramp who has not eaten anything for twenty-four hours will brace up under the influence of a hot-dog and a cup of coffee. It might lead to his believing in something. Karl Marx discovered the law of "economic determination." He did so at a moment when, under the influence

of Darwin, Huxley and others, a great stampede was being made in favor of every new thing that claimed to be "scientific." The scientific Latin word for civilized man is not *homo*, but *homo sapiens*, the man who knows. The doctrine that man will be good if he has enough to eat is false, and I know of no materialist who holds it. We know of bad men who have too much to eat.

Does the atheist rebel against God or does he rebel against a worn-out God? Does the atheist rebel against what the Psalmist wrote: "For God is my king of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth," or is the atheist rebelling against a God who is not trying to work out salvation in the midst of this earth or of any other earth? The argument of the atheists which has left the deepest impression with me may be stated thus: "If a just God exists, how can he permit injustice in the earth?" That is a good argument. Why does your atheist and your Marxian communist talk so much about "injustice"? It is because he believes in something that is not material, something that is above the plane of matter, which is justice. If there is injustice going on in the earth it is because there is an unjust, lazy, jobless God nearby. The human race passed through the mill of polytheism, and now it is in the mill of monotheism, and we are moving forwards all the time to discover that new fire within us that will strike injustice dead and that will work salvation in the midst of the earth.

Nobody who has not listened to atheist preachers in Hyde Park, London, on Sunday afternoon, haranguing the decent British public, can get a picture of what an atheist is, in the full, transcendent glory of his faith. Twenty years ago, in that great city of freedom, where from the prayer-book of the Church of England to the works of Charles Bradlaugh all ideas are looked upon as respectable, and treated with that tolerance of free speech which only the British understand, I attended the open-air churches of the atheists every Sunday. They are still preaching there from their collapsible pulpits, if they have

not become tired out with the faithlessness of Christians in the interim.

When Robinson Crusoe found himself alone on a desert island, his life at first was rather simple. It was governed by the law of economic determination. But when Friday appeared, a new law came into action—the Law of the Golden Rule. Were not the sons of Abraham materialists when they left a place of hunger and bondage to find a place “flowing with milk and honey”? The migrations of peoples have been to find food: Why? In order that men could reach the stature of the *homo sapiens*, in order to develop art and culture, in order to say good-bye to what is of the earth earthy, in order to liberate that cosmic ray that dwells within them and makes them one with the whole universe—and the memory of every step of decision and courage whereby they escaped from chains to freedom they celebrate as Feast of the Passover. No materialist believes in materialism. He believes in freedom. A materialist goes through materialism to arrive at what he believes in. No materialist wants man forever to live in the mud huts of materialism. He wants man to be like the winged Hermes who, soaring from the earth, flies from one star to another.

Marx and other socialists have held that the working class cannot be emancipated so long as that class clings to religion. They have therefore more or less frankly aimed at destroying religion. In other words, they admit, in addition to the law of economic determinism, a counterbalancing law of religious determinism, which means simply that the proletariat can never get better social and economic conditions than what the law of religious determinism entitles them to. It is possible to destroy a certain religious cult in a certain place by an act of force, but it is not possible to destroy the law of religious determinism. Nothing in the mind of man can be destroyed or created by force. He is a creature who yields only to reason. If a working man's religion is false, explain it to him, and show him where it is false. So far as a thirst for social justice is

concerned, as a characteristic of a nation, Marx's own people, the Jews, have shown a capacity in that direction which belittles that of all other nations added together. The Old Testament is an unsurpassed communistic propaganda book, in the name of the Lord God of Hosts. As for the New Testament, what obviously made it dangerous for the hard-headed Romans was the fascinating, captivating manner in which the communistic dream was set forth. Imagine what a thrill of rapture must have seized upon any person of that hopeless time, possessed of any moral or religious reflexes whatever, who read for the first time such a matchless piece of literature as the Sermon on the Mount! Added to that dream, painted in language which has never been equaled, was the halo of sacrifice, the heaven-sent perfume of martyrdom, which made the dream absolutely irresistible to the mind of the simple, kind-hearted person living under the hard, brutal sway of Rome. What mattered it if they gave up their lives? They escaped from a world which to them was a hell of poverty, blows and spiritual darkness. They gained freedom and they gained heaven. The slaves, in hunger and nakedness, in a world which cursed them, suddenly found themselves made blessed. A voice came to them which said:

Consider the lilies of the field. They toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

What an argument! Who could resist such a God as that? It was the God of Jesus, not the God of Cæsar Augustus!

## IV

### JESUS AND BILLY SUNDAY

BILLY SUNDAY, the well-known evangelist, says: "Our theology may get recast, but we can't recast truth." That sounds like Bob Ingersoll, the atheist. The evangelist and the atheist both hit the nail on the head, sometimes. The evangelist and the atheist both believe in truth. Then why is it that they do not agree? The reason they do not agree is because they see the facts of religious history through a glass darkly. They do not stand face to face with the light of facts. The reason that people do not agree is generally because they are partially informed. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." Another reason why the evangelist and the atheist do not agree is because they are afraid of each other. Each one, at bottom, is more liberal than the other one thinks that he is.

Billy Sunday is a man who grows. He is not hidebound, and with his religious sincerity, his humor and his original way of speaking he gets the ear of the masses. He tells them that they need to be saved, and they know that he is telling them the truth. Susan S. Hubbell, writing in the *Boston Transcript* about Billy Sunday, says: "He is a man who searches the Scriptures, and one who walks in a gold mine gathers nuggets."

I wish that I could take Billy Sunday down to Nimes, in southern France, where the Roman Empire once flourished and where the masses, who need to be saved, once started Billy Sunday's religion. There he would find food for evangelism and he would find old Roman coins that have never been recast and that would help him to vindicate Jesus. He could sit down with these coins and he could ask:

"How am I going to use my brain with these coins?"



I would say to him :

“I want you to use your brain just as you have always used it. Use your brain for God. Keep on looking for the Divine Father.”

We have strolled through ancient Nîmes, where the people, sitting at little tables arranged on the sidewalk, are enjoying their coffee or wine in the sunshine. Here and there, at a *café*, a trio of musicians is entertaining the people with music, not cheap jazz, but the best music of France. We are surrounded by that mysterious charm which emanates from an ancient civilization. We are surrounded by romance, such romance as only exists in the south of sunny France. Here in Nîmes truth is stranger than fiction. Things have changed here. Where the proud Empire of Cæsar Augustus once stood with its invincible armies and gladiatorial combats now stands the French Republic, and on the walls of the public buildings we see painted the words, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” What magic is this? Has a miracle been worked in Nîmes?

We go into a shop of a man who deals in old coins. We tell him that we are interested only in certain coins, those issued under the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. He sees that we are experts in the coin business, and he spreads before us some twenty coins, types of common coins that were in universal circulation, in the hands of the people, in the day of Jesus Christ, all over the Empire, from one end to the other. He politely hands to us a magnifying glass for our convenience, in case we wish to examine any detail of any particular coin.

I am glad to be here with an American gentleman, a man with a broad outlook, a warm heart; a man who has had an influence for good, clean, upright living all over the United States. He has, with a truth, searched the Scriptures, and he is an authority on those Scriptures. Jesus also searched the Scriptures, day and night. But above all else, the gentleman with me is a Protestant. We are in a Catholic country, and Catholics do not have that inveterate habit of searching the Scriptures

which is the peculiarity of the genuine Protestant. They have not been trained to it. The Scriptures are explained to the Catholics by the church. The Catholic accepts without question what is handed down from Rome. Therefore, were I to point out to a French Catholic (even one living right here in Nimes) such an inscription as the one on the gate of Augustus, he would probably say: "I have no right to form an opinion on this point. Such questions are not for me to decide. I must ask the church. I must ask the priest." On the other hand, the approach of the Protestant to what he calls the "Word of God" is direct. His own personal opinion and conviction as to what that Word of God means is the highest authority which he can recognize on this earth. He cannot put off responsibility for his own mind, his own conscience, his own soul, upon somebody else. The Protestant stands face to face with his Maker. He is his own judge and he must decide every question, not only in his own religion but in everything else, for himself. The importance that attaches to Jesus in the Scriptures is derived from precisely the same fact. He stood face to face with his Maker. No priest came between Jesus and God. The Protestant discusses. That is what Jesus did. Jesus started a discussion. The whole order of society in which he lived was called in question. This situation led, as often happens under similar circumstances, to a tragedy. The man who had started a discussion, the man who had searched the Scriptures, was put to death, but on the cross he handed out, and put across, and dictated to the entire pagan-heathen world the Scriptures. There was victory, and it remains for us still the one, outstanding, supreme lesson of life.

We now have the coins before us. They are of different sizes. Some are cracked. Some are oxidized and greenish. Some are a dark olive color. Some are almost black. They are all more or less circular, but their edges are irregular, because they were not made with such tools as we have today. The majority are of bronze, but there are a few silver pieces among

them. There is a particularly beautiful piece which represents the head of Diva Faustina. The artistry with which the hair, the neck, the features are chiseled would do credit to any of the old Greek masters of sculpture. Faustina was a *diva*, or goddess, but the coin is out of place, because Faustina was the wife of Marcus Aurelius, a later emperor. On the reverse of this coin is the word *Æternitas*—Eternity—surrounding a figure representing Rome as a goddess. The Christian of today looks upon Jerusalem as the sacred city. But in the old day of Jesus, Rome was the sacred city. Sanctity and eternity belonged by law only to Rome.

“Son of God” appears on several coins, in connection with the head of Augustus and a star. On other pieces we find the words “God Julius” surrounded by the wreath of oak leaves, sacred to Jupiter.

The coins, however, which are particularly interesting as applicable to a study of the Scriptures, bear the inscription “Divine Father Augustus.” Augustus is represented with a nimbus around his head, a radiation of light, such as we are familiar with in representations of Christ. On the reverse of these coins are written the words, “By order of the senate.”

We have here then a very interesting situation. In the first place, what effect, if any, would the fact that Augustus was called the “Divine Father” throughout the Empire have had upon the mind of Jesus? How would Jesus have reacted to Augustus as Divine Father? When Jesus prayed, “Our Father, which art in heaven,” was he praying to Augustus? From what we know of the general working of the mind of Jesus, would we be justified in assuming that he would have any serious objection to the worship of Augustus as the Divine Father? After a careful search of all the evidence bearing on the subject, I find only one verse, or possibly two, where Jesus uses the word “father” in such a way as to throw any light, even indirect, upon this problem. He says in one place: “Call no man on earth your father, for one is your father in heaven.”

Augustus was probably in heaven at that time, for he died about 15 A.D., and he was shipped to heaven straight off, by unanimous vote of the Roman senate; but if coins were still in circulation bearing the inscription "Divine Father Augustus," the people may have contracted the habit of calling Augustus the Divine Father, even after the latter's death and official resurrection.

There seems to be a confusion here as to who the real Divine Father was. There is a verse in which Jesus uses the word father in speaking to the chief priests in Jerusalem: "Ye are of your father the devil and the works of your father ye do." This is certainly rather hard language, hard on the chief priests, and hard for any interpretation of the gospel at this late hour, when most reasonable and educated people have lost faith in the existence of the devil, completely.

If Jesus was an educated man, how could he talk so earnestly about "the devil"? If the priests did "belong to the Romans," as the odd, strange voice in Vendée affirmed they did, there would be some reason to suppose that they had accepted Augustus as their "father." But if that were so, Jesus would be put in the position of picturing Augustus, or whoever the emperor was, as a divinity representing evil. If God, his God, Israel's God, could take the form of a man, the devil too could take the form of a man. That logic is simple enough. If God could go out of his way to take the form of a man, it is fair to assume that some very acute crisis had been reached between God and his adversary, the devil, on the earth, and the devil was always trying to double-cross God. The devil, then, in the mind of Jesus would not be some abstract proposition, but a more or less tangible incarnation of evil, in human form, having some definite relation to and power upon the earth.

Another coin in the collection before us may throw more light on the problem. It is a coin belonging to the same series as the celebrated "tribute-money," which was shown to Jesus by certain of his enemies in Jerusalem when they asked him the

question: "Is it lawful to render tribute to Cæsar?" It certainly was lawful to render tribute to Cæsar at that time in Jerusalem. Cæsar himself was not at all opposed to it. He determined everything that was "lawful" in Jerusalem, and he appointed the priests in Jerusalem to see that his laws were carried out. Next to having a patent to the Godhead, tribute was the chief thing that he was after. But the people in Jerusalem did not want to pay the tribute. If they were superstitious, they had good reason to be, and they did not want to pay tribute to the devil. The enemies of Jesus, therefore, thought that a splendid opportunity was open to "frame him up" or put him in a box. If Jesus were to tell the people that they ought to pay the tribute in return for enjoying the privilege of being governed by the Romans, the people's interest in Jesus, as a popular leader, would more or less cool off. If, on the other hand, Jesus were to tell the people what they wanted to hear, namely, that they ought not to pay the tribute, that the tribute was in the nature of an unjust extortion, we are led to assume, from what the gospels tell us, that he would be breaking the law in such a manner that his enemies could have him arrested and handed over, for punishment, to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor in Jerusalem at that time.

The "framing-up" of innocent people, Italians, foreigners and others, is a process which often succeeds even in our own time. It consummates in the beautiful and Christian sacrament known as "electrocution." Whether it comes from the devil or not is hard to determine, because of the extreme difficulty involved in following the devil. It is always hard to catch the devil with "the goods" on him. The characteristics of the devil are generally a silk hat, polite manners and all the external appearances of being a gentleman. His society name, whenever referred to in the gospels, is Satan.

In Jerusalem, the framing-up process did not succeed as planned. The gospel writers were certainly convinced of the existence of the devil. They talk as much about the devil as they

do about God. The devil is after them all the time, laying traps for them at every corner. Of course, in a world where there are two "Divine Fathers," it is not likely that one of them is going to recognize the other. They are not going to be polite to each other. In Jerusalem the devil controlled the police, the sanhedrin, and other points of similar strategic advantage.

The tribute-money which lies before us is a piece of silver about the diameter of a United States ten-cent piece, but slightly heavier in weight. It was called in those days a "silver penny," or *denarius*. On the face of the coin is a head of the emperor Tiberius and on the reverse side is a graceful figure, seated in a chair, and holding a long object looking like a spear. Encircling this figure is an inscription which reads "Pontifex Maximus." This refers to the office, held by the Roman emperor, of "great high priest" of all religion and of all religions. No priest of any religion anywhere in the Roman Empire could function as a priest without appointment from the great high priest in Rome or from his official Roman representatives, in office abroad.

To come back to the face of the coin bearing the image of Cæsar, and to make it perfectly clear just what the words of the superscription are, it will be well to set them out in Latin and then give the English translation. We are dealing with a silver *denarius* of the reign of Tiberius.

TI CÆSAR DIVI AUG F AUGUSTUS

Some of the words here were abbreviated, and a full spelling would produce the following:

*Tiberius Cæsar Divi Augustus Filius Augustus*

These words translated into English mean: *Tiberius Cæsar, Son of God-Augustus, Sacred Himself*. What they mean, more liberally translated, is that Tiberius is the son of Augustus, who is a God, and Tiberius is sacred (*augustus*) himself.

Now what happened was this: Jesus asked his enemies to show him the tribute-money, which they did. He then asked

the question: "Whose image and whose superscription is this?" They answered, "Cæsar's." Jesus then said: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." What God was Jesus talking about?

What was the superscription on the coin? Was it the mere name of Cæsar? Obviously not. More was there. The people of those days, who were paying this tribute, knew exactly what was written on the coin. On the coin, Cæsar and somebody named "God" were identified with each other. Cæsar wore the face of God and God wore the face of Cæsar.

In the way in which the gospels are written, it would be impossible for people living nineteen centuries afterwards to form the slightest idea of the meaning of that episode.

Jesus so answered the question as to avoid giving his enemies any pretext for having him arrested, but at the same time he magnificently saved himself before the eyes of the people by giving a back-handed blow to the Godhead of Augustus and his son Tiberius. He made a clear delineation between Cæsar and God—his God, the Jesus God, the God of Israel—which must have been extremely painful to Cæsar and to his friends among the Jews. "They wondered and went their way." Their frame-up broke down.

One saying of Jesus, which has been often quoted is, "Ye cannot serve two masters." It seems to fit in here very nicely. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The latter word "mammon" is somewhat vague. Who is "mammon"? What is "mammon"? And yet many of the sayings of Jesus, as reported, are vague. They do not strike just where we want them to strike, and for that reason theologians for centuries have amused themselves inventing such interpretations and meanings as were pleasing in their own eyes. The two masters battling for the control of the world in which Jesus lived were two conceptions of God, and in the clash between them Jesus died. We are told that we should pattern ourselves after Jesus. We should, if we wish to be happy, pattern ourselves after

everything that is admirable. The wars and battles that rage on the material plane are child's play compared to the trench-fighting of the mind and of the spirit. Jesus got his chance to throw himself into the breach. There are probably just as many breaches around us as there were in his day. Think of the study, the maneuvers, the calculations that a good general will go through with in his mind before he undertakes to lead his army over a difficult and dangerous mountain pass that is guarded by the enemy. The two-master system of running things on the earth is probably still going on today, under a different color and a different name. Jesus lived undoubtedly for the one-master system. He was completely "sold" to it. We each have to decide for ourselves today which system we like the best. Every materialist, every socialist, every pacifist, every man who thinks he is an advancer, wants his chance to throw himself into some breach. The animal man is content to be an animal. But the thinking man is different. With him lives throughout life one guiding thought. "Can I *do* something for humanity?" If we can leave something like that behind us, if we can put across some realization of this guiding thought, even on a very small scale, then we have won the true glory of the fighter, we have felt the thrill of the hero, we have got into the class with Jesus, we have not lived for nothing.



## V

### WHAT IS THE STATE?

THE Romans were undoubtedly a great, useful and intelligent people. What Rome did for us is written everywhere. No schoolboy can open his desk at school without coming in contact with the Rome of Julius Cæsar and Cicero. All that is well, because it keeps education and history from dying out. What the Romans built in brick and stone was built to last. We inherit their laws. We retain our months of July and August in memory of God Julius and God Augustus. The Romans did become corrupt with power and money, and to the extent that they became corrupt, to the extent that they claimed divinity for themselves they made a mistake. They lost their right to rule. A new force rose up to grapple with them and seize from their hands the power which they had abused. "The Son of God goes forth to war, a kingly crown to gain." Which Son of God—Augustus or Jesus? I remember once traveling in the Holy Land with an American gentleman from Colorado Springs, a wheat-dealer by profession, and a man who, like me, found a great fascination in the history of the Jews. We were driving down from Jerusalem to Hebron. I said to him: "How do you explain the fact that wherever we go in this Old World we see ruins left by the Romans, roads, bridges, aqueducts, temples; but the Jews have not left a single trace of their civilization, not one stone left upon another?" The answer came back: "That is easy to explain. The Romans built for the earth, but the Jews built for heaven." We are face to face with what the Jews built every time we go into church and hear the Bible read from the pulpit.

Rome represented the power of the state against Christianity and against God and against religion. What is this thing

called the "state," anyway? Where did it come from? We know where the church came from. The church rose up to seize the power which Rome had abused. The church was to stand, for it was built on Peter, "the rock." The gates of hell were not to prevail against it. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words, embodied in the church, shall not pass away." We are told that Jesus was not "political." What is the true meaning of this word political? It seems to me that we are not obliged to limit ourselves to some definition of "political" which may be supplied to us by some Tammany boss. It seems to me that whatever bears upon, or is germane to, the *res publica*, "the public thing," is properly political. The modern world has a false idea about politics, and this false idea can be traced back to the time when Jerome and Augustine divided history into a profane section and a sacred section. Politics, in the eyes of the modern world, is a profane matter as compared with religion. The modern world puts a stigma on politics, and then it follows the stigma. All this to me is false. It is false in relation to what Christianity was at its source. What I claim is that our modern world cannot go on trying to serve two masters, and I base this claim upon what I know of history during the last nineteen centuries. The church may have become corrupt, the church may have forgotten its origin, the church may have lost its vision, but the principle of the church is eternal. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the principle of the church will never pass away. The church rests on faith, not on armies. We cannot make a faith until we have the necessary material. Many things indicate that we are at a point, or rapidly coming to it, which marks the end of a journey, as far as faith is concerned, and where civilized man, if he is going to continue to exist, as a civilized being, will be forced to formulate a new faith. That will mean the slow beginning of new institutions. The old institutions will have to go, for "men do not put new wine into old bottles."

We are living in an age that has plenty of money but no

message. The message can come at any moment. "Watchman, what of the night?" is written in Isaiah, and in Matthew we find it written, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

The ancient Christian had no use for any state. For him the church was all-sufficient. It meant for him a "new heaven and a new earth." It is interesting and important to study and observe this attitude of mind, because it was the attitude of mind that created a new era. One man cannot work alone. He works with his fellows, and when he works with his fellows he is like the bee; he makes a honeycomb, a hive; he makes an institution. He never will make an institution that does not have a flaw in it somewhere. The old church had plenty of flaws in it undoubtedly, but it has wallowed and floundered along for a considerable length of time. The church is dead, but long live the church! The church is dead, but is it not true that whatever of humanity, liberty and general decency exists in the twentieth century is due to the new wine which was poured into a new bottle in the first century?

There is the materialistic or so-called "scientific" idea abroad today that religion as a power for this world is finished and the future belongs to statecraft. The educated world flocks to the idea that man is going to be saved through some non-religious League of Nations, or some non-religious Kellogg pact. No mistake could be greater. Such dodges are only the maneuvers of statecraft. The world will be saved just by going back to the source of true religion and understanding it, not in the old way, but in a new way.

The principle of the church is Catholic; that is to say, universal; but the church today is too small for all the Hindus, Mohammedans, agnostics, atheists, materialists, Jews, communists and other classes of unbelievers, who want to get into it. These people cannot swallow the old dogmas. Very well, then, let us have some new dogmas. We see about us a church that is apathetic, that prays, that drifts, that does not know

which way to turn. Some branches of it do some good along charitable, educational and social lines. Some branches of Protestantism appear to exist only for the purpose of giving a veneer of respectability to "cocktail" society. A person who goes into a Catholic church and sees people worshiping silver hearts of Jesus and plaster Virgins, surrounded by artificial flowers, and who supposes that the church was never anything else than a place where silver hearts and plaster Virgins could be worshiped, is a person who has no perspective view of history.

The church rests on faith, but the state rests on three things: legality, patriotism and force. The principle of faith does not harmonize with the principle of force, and sooner or later they will join in deadly combat. The demon of war and irresponsible force is not going to give up its grip over men without a terrible struggle. "Peace on earth, good will to men" was pronounced nineteen hundred years ago, and we are just nineteen hundred years nearer to it than we were then.

Mussolini, in trying to revive the imperial glory of the old Roman state, is on a false path. His face is turned backwards. He is building little or nothing that is permanent for the future. He is interested in flying machines and a vision of empire that was exploded in Rome on the ground where he stands, long ago. He holds his people under, for they are Catholics and accustomed to being held under, for modern Italy has not yet begun to study the Bible. He cannot see the things that lie under his own nose. He is a blind leader of the blind, but there are many others like him. The Italian dictator, adorned with all the culture of Europe as he is, able and capable man that he is, represents the irreligious idea of the omnipotence of the state. He cannot see the spiritual beauty which has made Rome eternal. He cannot see the meaning of the cross, with its eternal sadness, which broods over the city by the Tiber. The state, whichever way we turn it, whether we look at it as monarchy, democracy or dictatorship, always remains just the state. It

preserves order, puts down crime, coins money, levies taxes, and does other essential things, but it remains, under whatever form it takes, nationalistic and self-seeking. It thinks about itself first, instead of thinking about the other fellow first, or at least at the same time. "Love thy neighbor" never has been and never will be the guiding axiom of any state, and in the mouths of politicians such words sound hollow. The state is on a level lower than the best that is in us. The men who control "politics" are, generally speaking, on a level lower than the best material which the race produces. This is just as true today as it was in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The idea that all peoples can be welded into one people is a religious idea. It was, and is, the idea of the church. The church, as shall be, some day will be reborn and rebaptized. There is always the difference between the real and the ideal. The real is forever dying and the ideal is forever being born. The highest power is not in heaven, as in the day of Julius and Augustus, but in us. That doctrine will be the strength and backbone of the new church, or whatever else it is going to be called. The new church will draw its strength not from any supposed divine grace or pity, but from that cement of human kindness which, once cast, never can be broken.

In Germany, Hitler is trying to build up the "Third Empire." He, too, is on a false path. "Hitting the trail" for Jesus is pleasant, but hitting the trail for Hitler is just the contrary. His first act of statesmanship was to persecute the Jews, and to do it with such mad and unreasoning brutality that reasoning people were tempted to ask, "Are we dealing with a civilized man or with a rabid dog?" Not that the Jews cannot stand being persecuted and kicked. They hold the world's championship in this respect. But are the Germans a nation of "nuts," that they will consent to be governed by a rabid dog? Hitler is a good type of the modern state-maniac. To talk about him or write about him, even from a distance, is not pleasant. Therefore, we shall not dwell further on the subject.

The French, so far, have no taste for fascism or Hitlerism. There is something that still rings true (and they know it) in their famous, old-fashioned document, "The Rights of Man and of the Citizen." Victor Hugo said that Paris was the brain of the world. The French brain has certainly been a Godsend to the world. The majority of people in Paris still live on Liberty Street. Happy French! Keep your brains open and your hands free.

The coins that were spoken about as spread out in an antiquity shop in Nîmes were as a matter of fact not there. They are lying spread out before me on the desk. They were all picked up in various places in France and have been carried around by their owner for twenty-five years in a French sack. He plays with them like toys, the way a boy plays with marbles, and always plays "solitaire," because of not being able to get anyone to play with him. Here is one coin that represents God Julius sitting in his temple. Julius made God in his own image, or rather, he was so busy conquering the world, he got Mark Antony to do it for him. Mark Antony was appointed by the senate chief priest to Julius, and he sacrificed to Julius as a God during the lifetime of the latter. Such was the state then. Now, the simple-minded people of those days were asking: Could God take the form of a common man just as well as the form of an emperor? It might be so, but it would have to be proved. If God should take the form of a common man, that man certainly would have powers greater than those of ordinary men. If God were to take the form of a common man it would indicate that God cared almost as much about common people as he did about emperors. Such a fact as that might tend to disturb emperors and shake the order of things, and diminish the majesty that hedges emperors, thereby shaking that loyalty of the subject which means so much to emperors. We read in the Scriptures that when Herod the Great heard that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, he was "troubled." Herod was put in office by Augustus.

Since God lived in heaven, any man on the earth who was literally an incarnation of God would be in closer touch with heaven than other men. But the emperors had seen to it that heaven was reserved for themselves. They had it padlocked by law. Heaven, in those days, was not a place for common people. Heaven was a place for the Gods and Goddesses, and for those emperors and members of their families who were lucky enough to receive "apotheosis" at the hands of the Roman senate. These people formed the Holy Family (*Domus Divina*). Common people, when they died, went to Hades, or to some other third-class place underground. If God took the shape of a common man, that fact would seem to bring all common people closer to heaven.

To the emperor, and all those eating out of his hand, such ideas were nothing short of blasphemous. Laws were passed making such ideas blasphemy. Paul said: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the living God?" No, the people did not know that. That was good news, but by the laws of those times it was blasphemy. Paul wrote:

Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Those words were blasphemy, and Paul had his head cut off in Rome. In his second epistle to Timothy, written from Rome, Paul said: "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." The last documentary evidence we have about Paul, a prisoner in Rome, is contained in the book of Acts: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him. Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

If we read over the epistles of Paul we shall discover that from the point of view of Roman legality and established order they constituted, column after column, solid blasphemy, such as :

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints :  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

That was blasphemy. Paul was putting heart into those in Rome who were giving their blood for the new era.

What is this thing called the "state," anyway? Read the Book of Revelation :

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And shall go forth to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.

"Beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees," said Jesus. What were the Pharisees doing? They were upholding the laws against blasphemy, then enacted. They were playing a safe game with Rome. "The baptism of John, did it come from heaven or from men?" If it came from men it would have no importance, it would be ridiculous ; but if it came from heaven it would be blasphemy. Therefore the Pharisees were stumped. They could not answer.

John baptized Jesus in the River Jordan and a dove descended from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." That was blasphemy.

Did Jesus invent the idea of the Divine Father? It would seem that Augustus got ahead of him. But Jesus took that idea and made it real for the people in the Roman Empire. He made it beautiful. He made it the gate of freedom. He made it the mirror of eternity. "O Galilean, thou hast conquered," exclaimed the emperor Julian.



## VI

### WHAT WAS THE SYNAGOGUE?

How about the synagogues? These certainly were Jewish. These certainly were centers of Jewish opposition to Jesus. Not a bit of it! They were centers of Roman opposition to Jesus. The Jewish people were a clannish people and in the countries of the so-called Dispersion (Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, Rome) they stayed by themselves and did not mix with the rest of the population. They had an ancient custom to get together on the Sabbath for reading their Scriptures and prayer. The Gentile population had no such custom. The Roman laws forbade, generally speaking, all public meetings, outside of circuses, theatres, etc., but the Romans found themselves obliged to make some concessions to the Jews. The Romans had no objection to the Jews practicing their religion, provided that such religious freedom in no wise interfered with the state. They therefore permitted the Jews to build certain buildings known by the Greek word "synagogue," where it was lawful for the Jews to congregate on the Sabbath day. There were parties among the Jews, and wherever Rome went there was a party for her and a party against her. Ancient politics can only be understood by keeping this fact constantly in mind. From the advent of Pompey in Palestine the turmoils in Jerusalem can all be brought back to a fight between the party that was for Rome and the party against Rome. Josephus is full of this on every page and he himself was a Pharisee, belonging to the party that was for Rome. That was his idea of good government, and his history is written for the purpose of putting the Pharisees in the right and everybody else in the wrong. Josephus was all right, according to his lights.

The Romans, therefore, either built the synagogues for the Jews or allowed the Jews to build them for themselves. But this is certain, that anything inimical to the state would carefully be kept out of the synagogues by the Romans. The latter could not allow these places to become centers of rebellion. We find evidence in the gospels that a Roman centurion had built a synagogue for the Jews in Capernaum. How far this is evidence of any custom is uncertain, but I have heard it stated that Lord Kitchener, who had made some study of the matter, was of the opinion that the Romans had built the synagogues for the Jews. There is no evidence of any synagogues among the Jews before the coming of the Romans.

In 1914 I made a visit to ruins of certain synagogues in upper Galilee. I found on all of them the Roman insignia. The civic wreath pertaining to Augustus I found on two synagogues, and the Roman eagle on a third. On a fourth I found the crude and battered bust of a Roman emperor, and in a fifth I found niches made in the wall, evidently for the accommodation of the emperor's statue. All such things were contrary to the laws of the Jews. "Thou shalt make no graven image." What the Romans would do, under these conditions, would be to turn over the control of the synagogues to the party that they could most rely on, and the overwhelming weight of all the evidence indicates that that party was the party of the Pharisees. The Pharisee would accept the wreath or the eagle of the emperor or even his bust, and he would accommodate his religion to it. The Pharisee played a safe game. That seems to have taken place everywhere. In the English Bible the word synagogue is used once in the Old Testament (Psalms 74: 8), but there it is a translation from a Hebrew word which means simply "an appointed place of meeting." It has nothing to do with the synagogue with which we are dealing, which was started by the Romans and gradually became a Jewish institution, in later times.

With the above in view, let us glance at a concordance of the use of the word synagogue as it occurs in the New Testa-

ment, setting out those passages which show that the synagogue was against Jesus, and Jesus against the synagogue.

as the hypocrites do in the synagogues  
love to pray standing in the synagogues  
they will scourge you in their synagogues  
and love the chief seats in the synagogue  
some shall ye scourge in your synagogues  
and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten  
ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogue  
when they bring you unto the synagogues  
delivering up to the synagogues  
but are the synagogue of Satan  
I will make them of the synagogue of Satan  
he should be put out of the synagogue  
Chrispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue  
there came from the ruler of the synagogue  
the rulers of the synagogue sent unto

Paul tells us that he "punished them oft (the Christians) in every synagogue," and he tells us that, before his conversion, he belonged to "the straightest sect of the Pharisees." The Pharisees controlled the synagogues and Rome controlled the Pharisees. The latter were following the two-master system.

The doctrine of the Pharisees to which Jesus would seem to have taken exception is perhaps best explained by Josephus, who tells us that God had gone to live in Italy. Josephus tells us frankly that it was for this reason that he himself went over to the Romans.

The idea of a common person going to heaven in those days was simply unintelligible. The *hoi poloi* went under the ground. They went to Hades. The only way that I can adequately picture what Hades was like is to say that it looked like a modern subway. It was a dreary place and the public was getting tired of it. It is easy enough for us to believe in heaven today. Heaven is a more comfortable and sunshiny place than was Hades, but it took a long time to build heaven. We did not build heaven ourselves. We have inherited heaven. There are those today who question the immortality of the soul and who

deny that there is any such place as heaven. All that is apart from history. We are dealing here with history. If the people who deny heaven today had been looking into the lions' mouths in the arenas they would have seen the gates of heaven opening before them. I may be a little old-fashioned, but I like to think that Joan, Beethoven, Socrates, Peter and Paul are in heaven. I do not know where heaven is, but there is one thing certain I know about heaven: It has to be earned. There are people who earn and people who do not earn. The parables of Jesus all revolve more or less around the subject of the people who earn and the people who do not earn. My conception of heaven is of a place beautiful beyond description, filled with a sublime music which mortals cannot understand, and entered through a gate of dazzling marble over which is written just one word: "Pay."

The opposite of Hades was *apotheosis*, which was the road by which the emperors went to heaven. The central idea of apotheosis is that of a man becoming a god after his death. The ancient world believed in apotheosis. Today the idea is dead. Christianity killed it. But not to understand what apotheosis was is not to be able to understand Christianity, or the resurrection of Jesus. Great events that shape the history of man may remain unknown to and not understood by multitudes of people for long centuries after they have taken place. It is possible that we have not yet understood Christianity and it is highly possible that we cannot go ahead until we do understand it. How are we going to tell this story to the ditch-digger, the grocery-boy, the farm-hand, the stevedore or even to people higher up in the white-collar class? I could do it if I were a Billy Sunday, which I am not. For this reason I have doubts that the story will ever get to the masses. Nobody but a miracle-worker could produce an evocation of facts out of a civilization that is dead and buried in such a manner as to make it look life-like and dramatic to the average man in the street today. For this reason I live with my coins. I do not live with other people

at all—at least very seldom. Some people lie, but these coins do not lie. Emerson said that “if solitude is proud society is vulgar.” Well, my coins are neither proud nor vulgar. They are merely lumps of bronze and silver which are impartial truth-tellers of history. Here, for instance, is Julius Cæsar. What a wonderful fellow he was! He was born to rule because he had a divine ancestry. We know that here in the United States great importance is sometimes attached to pedigree. We have people in our own midst who trace their descent from ancestors who came over in the *Mayflower*. That descent is not divine but it is extremely respectable and it is as good as anything we have in the United States. Julius Cæsar was descended from Venus, or thought that he was—which was just as good—and he built a temple in the Roman forum to Venus Genetrix, Venus the Mother. We can have no idea today of the enormous importance which the Romans attached to nobility and aristocracy. Julius became a God and hence Venus, by a natural process of reasoning, became the Mother of God. But Venus, the mother of Julius, made no claim whatever to being a Virgin. When Julius was sixteen years old he assumed the *toga virilis*, which was the token of manhood, and shortly after this he was created *flamen Dialis*, or priest of Jupiter. There was in Rome a college of vestal virgins (for the Romans in the day of their moral decency had attached the highest importance to the principle of virginity in women) and this college helped Julius in all that he did, in spite of the fact that he was descended from Venus, a somewhat impure lady. Then Julius became a soldier and began to stamp out every nation that was foolish enough to think of resisting the power of Rome. At first he served under an older general and this general once gave Julius the “civic crown” for saving a fellow-soldier’s life. This civic crown was a beautiful affair (for the Romans, like the Greeks, had a keen eye for beauty) and it was made up of oak leaves twisted together (the oak being sacred to Jupiter) and tied together at the bottom with a gracefully knotted fillet.

This civic crown later became the official crest of the emperors and was one of the seven signs of their divinity, which the Romans called by the word *majestas*.

Let it be pointed out just here, as throwing light on the overwhelming importance which was attached to a noble ancestry in those days, that Jesus was descended, or supposed to be descended, from David, the royal house of the Jews.

The civic crown was later worn by the reigning emperor on his head, and all the coins before us show the emperor wearing either this crown or the radiated crown of the Sun-god, the nimbus, which the Christians later, without any authority from Rome, transferred to the head of Jesus, who was descended, according to their ideas, from the royal house of David. Whether or not Jesus was actually descended from David, our best judgment can be that his descent, whatever it was, was just as good as the descent of Julius from Venus.

The traveler who looks for old Roman ruins in Europe or Asia Minor or Palestine will here and there find altars which have, sculptured on them, the civic crown of the Roman emperor. The most beautiful piece of work of this kind which I ever found was, I think, in the museum at Arles, in southern France, near Nîmes. These were the altars upon which sacrifices were regularly made to the emperor. All law-abiding, patriotic people were expected to sacrifice to the emperor, who was the divine *pater*, and this was done by throwing a little incense upon the altar, where it was burned, thereby producing a pleasant aroma. If we go into a Catholic church today we shall see an altar to Christ, and a priest swinging some burning incense in front of the altar, thereby filling the church with a pleasant aroma. On many of the most ancient altars to Christ which I have seen in Europe is sculptured the civic crown of the emperor, but inside the crown is cut the monogram of Christ, or the Alpha and Omega, "the beginning and the end." The oldest altar to Christ which I found was near Lyons, where the first Christians set up their rude altar in a remote, secluded

part of the woods, where they thought the Romans would not find it. But the Romans did find it, and all the Christians were martyred in front of the altar to Augustus, in Lyons. The altar to Christ, therefore, began as an *opposition altar*. Neither Jesus nor the Christians invented this altar with the idea of starting a "new religion," suddenly let down to them, in a basket, out of the clouds. Those who are interested in pursuing this subject farther can find in the most ancient Christian basilica in Milan (the name of which for the moment escapes me) a sculpture on a sarcophagus which represents a Christian being forced to worship a bust of the emperor. Soldiers are pushing the bust in front of the Christian, but the latter is turning away and holding up his hands in prayer. Over the head of the Christian is seen the Star of Bethlehem, and this star brings me back to Julius. Julius had a star and this is the way he came to get it. But before coming to that, one more word about Cæsar's altar. When I was in the temple in Jerusalem I went down into a place where some Catholic priests were directing a bit of excavation. They had just found a stone altar which, when I came in, was lying against a wall. I took a photograph of the altar, because when one is "hitting the trail" one must always have a camera. On the altar was Cæsar's civic crown. This showed that Cæsar had been worshiped in the temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps that explains what Jesus was driving at when he said to the Jewish priests: "Ye have made of my father's house a den of thieves." The Catholic priests who had excavated the altar did not seem to have the vaguest understanding of what the altar meant, and had I started in to explain to them what it meant, perhaps I should still be standing there, talking and explaining.

The dream of Julius was to conquer the world, and after he passed the Rubicon that dream was realized. Every school-boy knows the wonderful things which Julius did in Gaul, and how, when he swept over to Asia Minor with his army, he said: "I came: I saw: I conquered." Then arrived the moment when

into the heart of Julius entered the desire for "a kingly crown." Old Rome had been a republic, and the old Romans, like Cato, had had a stern love for liberty. They hated kings. But now Julius had conquered the *orbis terrarum*, everybody was looking up to him as a superman, and perhaps he thought that as king he could better rule his vast conquests than in any other way. He was the *enfant terrible*, not of a republic, but of an empire, and he was the idol of the populace of Rome who already worshipped him as a God. He had killed all the enemies of Rome or sold them wholesale into slavery. But the nations who submitted he treated with the greatest liberality, and on their leading men he bestowed the right of Roman citizenship. To any one who submitted to and helped Rome every avenue to honor, greatness, wealth and success was opened. When the devil led Jesus up to the top of a high mountain and showed him all the dominions lying below, the devil said to him: "All this will I give to you if you will only fall down and worship me."

In Egypt, Julius fell a victim to the charms of a sensuous woman called Cleopatra, but, being a strong man, threw that off. He returned to Rome where he celebrated triumph after triumph. But, great Cæsar, "beware the Ides of March!" On that day he was murdered by republicans, who still believed in liberty, in the senate house at the foot of Pompey's statue.

On one of the silver coins before us we see Julius sitting as a God in the temple which was built to him on the Capitoline hill in Rome, during his lifetime. On another silver coin we see a star of eight points and across the star are written the words "God Julius." One of the points of the star is flaming, which indicates that the star is a traveling star or comet.

A strange thing—a miracle—happened in Rome when Julius fell under the daggers of the assassins, or rather, later, at the time of the funeral. It was decided to burn the body in front of Pompey's senate house. A pyre was made and, of a sudden, two men with swords by their sides and spears in their hands set fire to the pyre. The people rushed into the senate



house and tearing out the benches heaped them on the pyre. The soldiers cast their armor, and the ladies their jewels, into the flames. The people lingered for many nights over the spot where the body of their hero was burnt, and among them were Jews, for Cæsar, unlike Hitler, had been liberal and fair to the Jews. During the games which Augustus, his heir, celebrated to his memory, a traveling star or comet blazed in heaven for seven nights together, rising always about eleven o'clock at night. It was supposed to be the soul of Cæsar, the Unconquerable God, now received into heaven. For this reason he and his heir Augustus are represented with a star over the brow.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod, the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. . . . When they had heard the king they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

On one of the silver coins before us is a funeral pyre surrounded by the word "Consecratio." On the reverse is the portrait of "God Antoninus." The "Consecratio" was the apotheosis, and at the moment of setting fire to the pyre an eagle, held in a cage on top of the pyre, was liberated. This was symbolic of the emperor's assumption into heaven. His soul ascended to heaven on the back of an eagle. When Augustus died and had his apotheosis, a Roman of prætorian rank swore on his oath that he saw the soul of Augustus ascend from the funeral pyre to heaven.

We have, therefore, an opposition altar, an opposition nimbus, an opposition wreath, an opposition heaven, an opposition resurrection into heaven, an opposition Divine Father, an opposition Son of God, and an opposition Star of Bethlehem. What effect, if any, would these facts have in any summing up of what Christianity was or is along the lines, say, of what is called modernism? Believers may of course slip over them the way water slips over a duck's back. Believers can take them or leave them. They might turn some halfway believers into full believers. But we are writing to the unbeliever. Would they help the unbeliever, to any extent, in getting a picture of what happened—a picture that is not necessarily in accordance with miracles but in accordance with what he knows of the general laws of human nature?

The stars in Bethlehem on Christmas night are extremely brilliant and beautiful. At least they were on one Christmas eve when I went there to take part in the celebration of the great Christian anniversary. I had become acquainted in Jerusalem with a Mormon missionary, from Salt Lake City, by the name of Hansen, and we walked over to Bethlehem together. I have always been lucky, on my travels, in falling in with Americans who belong to the class known in the United States as one hundred per cent Americans, and this Mormon missionary belonged to that class, and I did, and in foreign countries blood is thicker than water, and Hansen and I were congenial companions. There was one thing I liked particularly about Hansen. He never tried to convert me to Mormonism.

The priests in a monastery attached to the Church of the Nativity extended hospitality to us. They gave us supper consisting of bread, cheese and wine and they put at our disposal a room consisting of four whitewashed walls, two beds and one crucifix.

After supper we went into the grotto of the Nativity. Here many people were worshipping. One woman scared me by falling down suddenly on the ground and hitting her forehead against

the pavement. That was the ancient fashion in which people worshiped the emperor and was called "adoration." The early Christians took it over and applied it to Christ. This woman in the grotto had inherited her form of worshiping from the earliest times. Two Turkish soldiers were there armed with rifles (it was in the days before Lord Allenby and the British had taken over control of Palestine) and these soldiers were on hand to prevent the various worshiping sects from scrapping with each other. The sight of these soldiers ought to have made me think of "peace on earth, good will to men," but it did not. After leaving the grotto we went into the part of the Church of the Nativity where the Christmas service of the Catholics was going on. This service was extremely long, lasting till daylight, and after four hours we had got enough of it and retired to our whitewashed bedroom to sleep. About one hour after I had got into bed and asleep I awoke and saw a little spot of light dancing about gently on the wall. I got out of bed gently and looked out of the window to see where this gentle light was coming from. But I could see nothing. All was dark outside. Then I awoke Hansen and said: "I see a spot of light moving about on that wall. Do you see it?" Hansen saw it and got out of bed and we both looked out of the window to see where the light was coming from. But all was dark. Could the light come from inside the wall? The wall was made of stone, two feet thick. I tried to touch the light, but it got away from me. Hansen went to sleep again, but I did not. Three times I awoke Hansen and he saw the light and three times he went to sleep. I did not go to sleep at all. I was looking at a miracle, and I wanted to enjoy it. Modern scientists tell us that miracles have never taken place because they are contrary to known science. They may be right, but scientists do not know everything—few have ever been to Bethlehem on Christmas eve—and the scientists of one generation always look like fools to the scientists of the next.

## VII

### MISTAKES ABOUT JESUS

"I AND my Father are one," said Jesus. That is perfectly true. That is modern humanism, only a little better. Jesus and Jehovah were one. Jesus was the first to discover it. With regard to the Virgin birth of Jesus, he had nothing to do with it himself and consequently was not responsible for it. If it was a mistake, it was not his mistake. One thing is certain. He did not go around telling people that he was born of a Virgin. He had more important matters with which to deal. There is no evidence that he told other men that he was more closely connected with God than they were, provided they wanted to be as closely connected with God as he was. There is no evidence that he claimed to be the Messiah expected by the Jews. He claimed apparently to be the Messiah forbidden by the Romans. A woman said to him: "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ. When he is come he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he." Was not Jesus as good as anybody else? Could he not tell the woman what she wanted to know just about as well as any other Messiah? The only law against his doing so was Roman law. Did he have any right to violate Roman law? Jesus did not claim to have a patent to the Godhead or a patent to divinity. He left that to Cæsar. He made no claim which could either be recognized or not recognized by the Jews. He made a claim which *could not be recognized* by the Romans. Jesus did not say that he came from God to save the Jews or anyone else. He showed a way whereby anybody could save himself, whether Jew or non-Jew.

It is true that among Christians today Jesus is "revered as

all-loving, faultless, an unparalleled model for mankind." A certain "impeccability attaches to him so that any insinuation that he could have made any mistakes" is looked upon as slightly bordering on blasphemy. William Floyd in his book entitled "The Mistakes of Jesus," makes the above and the following statements: "Respect for the principles of Jesus is so inbred in the American people of all faiths that an attempt to disparage his worth is denounced as bad taste. The detractor is suspected of being an immoral person, no matter how convincing may be the truth which he presents. In popular opinion Jesus never made a mistake; all his teachings were infallible; no other view is tolerated."

My opinion is that if Jesus made mistakes, he made very few. He did not make as many mistakes about himself as others have made about him. The fact that so many people in the United States are suffering from an "inbred respect" for Jesus is not in my opinion a fact that is to be entirely regretted. The extreme and oftentimes unreasoning devotion to Jesus, while it is at times rather trying, does not indicate that the people who are afflicted with it are hopelessly and incurably stupid. On the contrary, it shows in my opinion that there is some small glimmer of hope for the United States, as a going enterprise, inspired with the purpose of accomplishing something along the lines of civilization, both now and in the future. In fact, I may go so far as to say that in my opinion, were this "inbred respect" suddenly to disappear, I should see no ray of hope for the United States whatever. It is a slender thread which holds the United States from falling into a gulf of destruction.\*

\* The best feature, I think, of Mr. Floyd's book is the title: "The Mistakes of Jesus." It cannot fail to be helpful for everybody to come face to face with such a neat proposition as is implied in such a title. I cannot see where Jesus made mistakes, but were he in a position to communicate with us he might affirm that he had made a great many. The only mistake that might reasonably be charged against him is not one of doctrinal error, but one of oversight. He failed to take sufficient pains to ensure that the records of the great movement which he was founding on Peter should be kept in a more clear and accurate way than the way in which they were kept.

The fact that God did not create the world in six days, sometime in the year 4004 B.C. (a fact which science has now gladly discovered and proved) does not annihilate either the Jewish or the Christian Bible, nor does it compromise the reputation of Jesus, who seems to have derived most of his common sense from one of these sources of information. Is the Bible the infallible Word of God? No. The Bible is the fallible and immature word of man about God. Man is changing and improving his "word" about God all the time. God is a growing element in man's mind. God is not a fossil in man's mind. Infallibility for the Bible is claimed only by persons who did not write it. The men who wrote the Bible made no such claim. They never heard of the word "infallibility." They used simple words and wrote a Bible understandable for simple people, and nothing is in the Bible, or can be put into it, which they did not put into it. Is the Bible the inspired Word of God? No. The Bible is and was what its writers were, no more, no less. The Bible was the inspired aspiration towards God of the men who wrote it.

"My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus, or, rather, he did not say it. The words are ascribed to him by the Johannine gospel as having been addressed by him to Pilate. Mistakes about Jesus began a long time ago. The three so-called synoptic gospels affirm that Jesus said nothing or practically nothing to Pilate. He held his peace. The Johannine gospel, like the book of Revelation, is so overloaded with mystical jewelry that all authorities agree that it is not a reliable record of objective historical fact. The four gospels being the only extant evidence in our hands of what took place, we are constrained to take the witness of three against one that these words were never uttered.

Assuming, however, that these words were uttered by Jesus to Pilate, they are entirely consistent with the general tenor of the utterances of Jesus, as we know them. Jesus was not speaking to Einstein, Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Mrs. Eddy or Karl

Marx. He was speaking to a Roman, who was probably not a humanist or a mystic or an evolutionist or a "relativity" professor or a Christian Scientist and whose ideas about God, being handed down to him in black and white by the Roman senate and the high priest of Jupiter, were probably not very complicated or abstract. Intellectually speaking, Jesus and Pilate were not of the same brotherhood. Pilate understood very well how to handle political roughnecks, but he seems to have admitted that Jesus did not quite fit into that class. What Jesus said, or could have said, to Pilate was this: "My kingdom is not of this world, but of a changed world under the command of a changed God." Pilate did what Jesus wanted him to do. Jesus wanted to die and Pilate helped him to die. Perhaps Jesus made a mistake in wanting to die. In no wise do I care to pass on that point. On that point every man, at such a crisis, must be his own judge, as to whether he is making a mistake or not making a mistake. It is not for others to pass judgment upon him.

The wireless operator on a ship that is sinking goes to his machine and sends a wave asking for help. There were many people in those days who were in distress and who were signaling for help. They were billowed about in a black night on a stormy sea. Suddenly the clouds broke and they saw a lighthouse. They made for the lighthouse and were saved.

Did Jesus believe in prohibition? No. He believed in temperance.

Was Jesus perfect? No, because Jesus was a man of character. Perfection is devoid of character. Jesus, by having character, was a considerable distance above perfection. Jesus was distinctly superior to perfection. He was not like a perfect cake of moral ice cream.

Did Jesus believe in birth-control? No, in self-control. In fact, he was the founder of the self-control movement.

Did Adam and Eve fall? No, they did just the opposite.

They crept upward. Instead of going around naked they wore fig leaves.

In the Old Testament, did God favor slavery, murder, deception, stealing, and other similar acts supposed to be virtues in those days? No, but many men thought he did. Did God countenance the World War in 1914? No, but many good people thought he did. Men think, in their egotism, that God is always butting into their affairs, which are generally on a very small scale—too small, in fact, for God to look at.

Did Jesus refer to his Divine Father as perfect? No, not often. The fourth gospel talks a good deal about perfection. But perfection did not bother Jesus much. Jesus was poetical, and perfection is not a good subject for poetry. He only referred to his Divine Father as better than the other Divine Fathers then doing a land-office business in and about the places frequented by Jesus.

If the Bible is not the Word of God, does the whole system of Christian theology fall to the ground? No, because more yet may be added to the Bible and probably will be. The Bible, although several thousand years old, is probably only in its infancy. Christian theology has not yet grown up, and the Bible is only in its first edition.

Did Jesus believe in hell? Yes, most decidedly; but only for those selected people who honestly earned it. Every reasonable man knows that there must be a place of torment somewhere for those who are honestly and conscientiously wicked. The determined blackguard who does a dirty piece of work here will certainly be given a chance to scrub the dirt from his hands somewhere else. That applies to recent occurrences of which we all have a painful recollection. The scrubbing-up will come later.

Was Jesus right when he said to his apostles: "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them"? Yes, absolutely. "Thou shalt not worship any graven image"—where was that written? For the benefit of any unbeliever who has



not read the Bible we can refer him to the Ten Commandments. A large percentage of the mixed population with whom Jesus was dealing in Galilee were worshiping graven images or idols of the Roman emperor. That kind of worship was extremely fashionable all over the Roman Empire. People of fashion always set the pace for people lower down. But according to the Law of Moses it would be sin. All people, as a matter of fact, in the Empire, were obliged to swear an oath of loyalty to the divine Roman emperor. That also was sin. Jesus said: "Swear not at all." Peter was given power to loose from that oath. If the apostles were able to persuade image worshipers to reform their ways, the sin already committed could be remitted. That was the origin of "absolution." The apostles would make an official record of absolution and the person absolved would be placed in a certain sense on probation. The dangers of relapse into sin were many and terrible (among them the Roman execution axe) and if a person slipped back into the mud, his sins were retained unto him. Peter had power "to bind and to loose." He held the keys to heaven. None passed without his permission. Nobody could go to heaven with mud on his feet. If one will visit Trajan's Forum in Rome, one will see, on top of the lofty column where once stood the statue of the emperor Trajan, the bronze figure of Peter, holding the key of heaven and wearing on his head the nimbus of the emperor Trajan.

Did Jesus believe in angels and devils? No, not deeply. He was trying to arrive in a world that would be free of angels and devils. Of course, in those days there were devils of all sizes. They would run into swine and do other spectacular stunts unheard of today. Angels and devils were plaguing the people considerably, and when the people were with Jesus the angels and devils stayed respectfully in the background. By temperament Jesus was essentially poetic. His figures of language were often pure poetry. For some mysterious reason poetry fascinates the human heart, that subtle, intriguing poetry

which is always "in tune with the infinite." Jesus made the people sit down on the grass; he gave them something to eat, and then he pleasantly tossed to them bouquets of poetry. The lowly people of Galilee never forgot that poetry. "They heard him gladly."

Did Jesus cure the sick? Yes, he cured many people who thought they were sick. He gave them something pleasant to think about and that cured them.

Did Jesus perform miracles? The people around the countryside of Nazareth were willing to believe in miracles. The ethical value of a miracle, in their eyes, depended on who performed the miracle, God or the devil. If the devil performed miracles, God could do it too, otherwise he would be no match for the devil. No serious, thinking person today, even among Fundamentalists or Catholics, believes that Jesus walked on the water or raised from the dead a body that was so much dead that it had begun to smell unpleasantly. I have given this statement careful consideration, alone by myself. Reader, if you wish to find truth, keep other people away. Keep away from the movies and the radio. Look inside. You will be guided to find what you are looking for. I do not mix much with Fundamentalists or Catholics, or anybody else, but I believe that the above considered statement of their opinion is correct. The story of the miracles—I am talking now of Jesus' miracles, not the devil's—has helped humanity in its battle to overcome the ignorance of the mind.

Did Jesus believe in the approaching end of the world? Jesus and his friends had no use for the state, which they called "Satan's kingdom." They expected its rapid dissolution and they hoped to see shortly a "new heaven and a new earth." They were too optimistic as to the length of time needed for Satan to abdicate, but they succeeded in pushing him off the map in the end.

Did Jesus believe in the Trinity? No, certainly not. He was unfortunate enough to be born too early to be present at

the arrival of the Trinity. But the Romans believed in the famous Capitoline Trinity, consisting of Jupiter, Minerva and Juno.

Did Jesus want the people to pray? Yes, and he gave them a prayer to use:

Our Father, which art in heaven (not Cæsar's heaven)  
Hallowed be thy name (not hallowed like Cæsar's name)  
Thy kingdom come (not Cæsar's kingdom)  
Thy will be done (not Cæsar's will)  
in earth as in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread (not bread and circuses)  
And forgive us our debts (not as Cæsar forgives debts)  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation (temptation to sin)  
but deliver us from evil (Satan and all his works)  
For thine is the kingdom (not Cæsar's kingdom)  
and the power (not Cæsar's power)  
and the glory (not Cæsar's glory)  
for ever,  
Amen.

## VIII

### COME BACK TO JESUS

THE Rev. David Carl Colony, of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, says: "Unless the church becomes militant against injustice and greed, it will not be long before the church in America goes the way of Russian orthodoxy."

Personally, I am not in the church. If I were, I should want to be the Pope and direct it myself. How is the church going to be militant? There is only one way. Come back to first principles. Start a new sect (it is about time to start one) and call it the "Come Back." Stop giving the people opiates. The trouble in Russia was that the people had been overdosed with religious opium and they had to do something radical to get the poison out of their system. They were so far gone that no come back seems to be possible for them just now. Come back to Jesus. Hit the trail for Jesus. Jesus can save. The leading newspaper of Boston publishes every Saturday night a whole page devoted to "come back" religion. Nothing of this kind was ever published in Russia. I keep in very close touch with Europe. I know what they are thinking about—or not thinking about—in Rome. I follow all the "Don't think" movements in Paris, Rome, Geneva and Berlin. I keep accurate measurements of the European brain. I know what that brain can do and what it cannot do, and I know that when come back religion gets started, the start is going to be made right here, and not over there.

What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth

her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

The opiate in this country is chiefly indifference. We are not looking for what has been lost, and consequently we have nothing to rejoice about. We have plenty of liberty to enjoy plenty of mental laziness. Let us keep the former and get rid of the latter. Of course, we are living in an age that has gone "nutty" on the subject of mechanics and economics. This combination slightly dopes spiritual insight. But back of this apparent obfuscation is the extraordinary, voluntary, blind, independent devotion to Jesus about which Mr. William Floyd complains so earnestly. The weakness of the religious radicals and modernists is that they get away from Jesus. They cool off on that subject (for the good reason that they do not seem to know much about it) and that is the reason that the Jesus-faithful Fundamentalists will have nothing to do with them. The latter hold the thread which prevents the U. S. A. from plunging into that gulf of destruction which is covered with bodies of men, women and children slain by kidnapers, slain by drunken, crazy automobile drivers, or slain by the grinding wheels of soulless business and industry. The Nation, founded by the Pilgrims and held together by Lincoln, is not going to take the plunge because, although it is tottering on the brink of the yawning gulf, the Jesus-faithful evangelists, Fundamentalists and Catholics have got their feet planted against it like mules. If the radicals wish to take away from the Fundamentalists the divine Jesus, they must give back in exchange the human Jesus, and that is what up to the present time they have been wholly unable to do.

We are told that Jesus was not "in politics." That is only a theological deduction. Every minister starts out with this *a priori* assumption which was drilled into him in the Theology School. To the historian, it makes no difference whether Jesus was or was not in politics. The historian is not a controversialist. All he can do is to submit the facts upon which some kind of

intelligent judgment can be made as to who Jesus was. The man who has the facts holds the cards, and is entitled to make a decision.

We have seen, now, that there were certain things which Jesus and his disciples could not say, without violating Roman law. The law in question was called the "law of majesty," the *lex majestas*. That law was paramount and sovereign in the land of the Jews and everywhere else. There was no Jewish political law. The law of majesty punished by death any person, anywhere in the Empire, who laid claim to having any connection with divinity, directly or indirectly. The underlying *motif* of Roman politics in Jerusalem was not very complicated. It converged always to the same point, namely, to set up the statue of the emperor in the inner sanctuary of the temple in Jerusalem. It is that which led to the ultimate revolt of the Jews, followed by the terrible suppression under Vespasian and Titus. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place," of course refers to the setting up of the statue in the temple. The statue was, in fact, never set up, but it was the attempt to set it up, carried on persistently year after year, which constitutes the fiery background of the drama which we are studying. The Romans always hoped to emasculate completely the Jews' religion. They never succeeded, but they did succeed in emasculating certain Jews, and that fact constitutes the warp and woof of the gospel story. The Romans understood well that until they could set up the statue of the emperor in the Jewish sanctuary, the Jews never would be properly conquered. The Jews were dispersed, but they *never* were conquered.

How did the Romans uphold this law of majesty? They could only do it in one way—by the active coöperation of their friends throughout the Empire. In Judea the Pharisees co-operated with the Romans. We must not be biased or prejudiced against the Pharisees. There were many good men among them. Hillel, a man greatly revered among the Jews to this day,

was a Pharisee, and he is recognized as the founder of rabbinism. But rabbinism itself was indirectly a Roman product. The office of rabbi was introduced among the Jews by the Romans. It corresponded to the office of "*magister*" in other parts of the Empire. The *magister* or rabbi was saluted by the title of "Master." Jesus speaks of the rabbis as loving to be saluted as "Master." It was a title of distinction which they obtained by the Roman law. The office of "scribe" was also a Roman establishment. A scribe (*scriba*) was one of the commonest Roman functionaries throughout the Empire. He came next in rank after the Roman knights. The Pharisees adapted themselves to Romanism. They were doubtless substantial, order-loving people and they dreaded the turmoil and chaos of revolution. Rome stood in their eyes for security, peace, civilization, good government. An exact parallel to them can be found today in India, where a very substantial body of educated, well-to-do people is in favor of the British occupation, and dreads the results of a political shake-up. They might like to be free, but they think the price to pay is too much. A man like Hillel, immersed in theological studies and taking no possible interest in politics, would instinctively be a Pharisee because that party meant for him peace and security in the pursuit of studies which to him were important.

All these things to Jesus were innovations, having nothing to do with the laws and institutions of the Jews. Jesus hated and despised these importations from abroad, and he looked upon them as the work of the devil. One can see exactly where the clash came. Naturally, high-minded Pharisees like Hillel could not go so far as agreeing to such a desecration of their law as would be involved in setting up the statue of the emperor in the holy of holies. But the Pharisees were, on the whole, the party of compromise, opposed to political anarchy, choosing the lesser of two evils; and it was from their ranks that the Romans drew such tools, like Caiaphas, as they needed for the proper functioning of their government.

The Romans, having established the law of majesty, could not make any exception in favor of Jesus, and Jesus did not want them to make any exception. When it came to the final show-down, Pilate was disposed to waver, but Caiaphas called out for the death of Jesus, because his job as high priest of the Roman emperor in Jerusalem was to uphold the law of majesty.

Caiaphas was at the head of the sanhedrin, and this institution demands a word of explanation. It has been supposed to be Jewish. It was nothing of the kind. In the year 63 B.C., the Roman general, Gabinius, left in charge of Palestine by Pompey, established five sanhedrins in Jewish territory. The chief of these was at Jerusalem, and that is the one with which we are dealing. No sanhedrin existed among the Jews prior to that time.

Assuming that Jesus was about thirty-five years old when he came in clash with the sanhedrin, that institution would have had back of it a life of ninety-eight years, a time sufficiently long for it to have accumulated a certain amount of tradition. Still, in the eyes of Jesus it would be a pure innovation, utterly foreign to the history and life of the Jews, a mere political machine in the hands of a foreign power.

The Roman system from the time of Augustus was universally the same. The Romans were the greatest organizers the world has ever seen. In order to hold the whole structure together they established the imperial worship. From one end to the other of the Empire they built temples for the worship of the emperor. The only completely intact temple of this kind which now stands is in the town of Vienne, some twenty miles south from Lyons, in France.\* The inscription on it was:

"To God Augustus the Best and the Greatest."

\*A good picture of the type of temple dedicated to the worship of Augustus may be seen in Webster's *New International Dictionary of the English Language* (1926) at page 119 under the title of "Architecture." The cut is marked: The Temple at Nîmes, or *Maison Carrée*. This temple was the "capitol" at Nîmes and though not built originally for that purpose was, under Augustus, dedicated to the worship of the emperor.



Palestine was literally covered with such temples by Herod the Great. I have visited the ruins of the one which he built on top of the mountain at Samaria. I found there the colossal statue of the emperor which had been excavated and left there by the excavators. Herod built another temple at Cæsarea Philippi, no remains of which are left, but it was to that point and similar points that Jesus went, for he had declared war against the imperial cult. We find in the gospel of Matthew the following story:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Right there is where the Catholic church was founded, on the dusty road going up to Cæsarea Philippi from Bethsaida.

Could Caiaphas have "listened in" to that conversation, he would have gone to Pilate and said to him about Jesus (what Disraeli, a Jew, once said about Bismarck): "Watch that man. He knows what he wants."

Jesus took the job of being the Messiah, and the reason why he took it was simply because nobody else wanted the job. Who wanted a job that would lead to being crucified?

"Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."

To speak about that matter would constitute blasphemy under the laws prevailing in Cæsarea Philippi. Therefore they were to keep that matter quietly under their hats.

It has always been supposed that Caiaphas was high priest of the Jews. He was not. He was high priest of the Roman emperor. He was appointed and reappointed by Pilate, annually, over a period of some ten years. The high priests of the emperor, everywhere, were appointed annually, and the gospels tell us that Caiaphas was the high priest "for that year." Undoubtedly the Jews had had a high priesthood in Old Testament days, but the Romans took over this institution, as they took over everything else that they could use.

The first step, in empire, was to build the temple to Cæsar. That was called the "Capitol." The second step was to appoint a high priest, because if Cæsar was a God it was necessary that there should be a high priest to celebrate his worship and conduct the sacrifices in his honor. Those sacrifices were conducted in the temple in Jerusalem by the high priest, as in every other city and colony of the Empire where there was a "capitol." In Jerusalem the old Jewish temple was being used for that purpose.

The third step was to organize a *concilium* or council, at the seat of the capitol, and of this *concilium* the high priest was president. The other members of the *concilium* were called "chief priests," and the various functionaries connected with the work of the *concilium* were called "scribes," or writers. That was the political governing body of all the area covered by its jurisdiction. In the Greek-speaking countries of the Empire this *concilium* was called by the Greek word "sanhedrin." It was precisely the same thing under a different name, and this is the sanhedrin with which we meet in Jerusalem. What we have in Jerusalem is a high priest of Cæsar at the head of a *concilium* or sanhedrin which is charged with affairs of local government, daily sacrifices in honor of Rome and the emperor, the maintenance of the law of majesty and of all other Roman laws and regulations.

The insignia of rank of a high priest of Augustus was a golden crown and a toga bordered with purple. Caiaphas, the

high priest of Augustus in Jerusalem, wore this golden crown and the toga bordered with purple.

In 1914 I visited the seven places where Paul founded the seven churches of Asia—Ephesus, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Thyatira, Smyrna, Pergamos. I found nothing of interest or importance, as I recollect, except at Pergamos and Ephesus.

Why did Paul single out these seven ancient towns as appropriate places for establishing churches? We open a book by Paul Guiraud, in French, entitled: *Les Assemblées Provinciales dans l'Empire Romain*. This book is the archæological authority on this particular subject. We find that the Roman province known as "Asia" was divided into seven districts: Pergamos, Smyrna, Sardis, Ephesus, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Cyzicus. This list corresponds with the list of the "seven churches," with the exception of Cyzicus. In place of this latter town, the Book of Revelation mentions Thyatira. In each of these seven places there was a temple to Cæsar with a sanhedrin and a high priest of Augustus. The Book of Revelation speaks of Jews, in these places, who were of the "synagogue of Satan." These were Jews who had gone over completely to the worship of Augustus—sold out completely.

The first martyr that we know about, after Stephen, was Antipas, "my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." That was at Pergamos, and I found at Pergamos the old Roman basilica, or court house, where undoubtedly Antipas was put on trial before the Roman governor of that district, and sentenced to death.

What I found at Ephesus was even more interesting. Ephesus now is a mere city of the dead. No human being lives there. I found the old theater into which Paul went to testify to the "Lord Jesus." Paul certainly had his nerve with him when he went into that place. I found the great inscription which, in his day, had stood over the theater: "To Diana of the Ephesians and to God Claudius." I measured the inscription by means of an umbrella that I carried and I took a photograph of the inscription with the umbrella standing against it. That umbrella I still have. It is my Holy umbrella, and for many years I have not used it for the purposes to which umbrellas are usually applied.

## IX

### SWEAR NOT AT ALL

BEFORE Julius had established the Empire, the highest deity of the Romans was Jupiter. On his temples was inscribed:

TO JUPITER THE BEST AND THE GREATEST

Under Augustus, Jupiter was put on a lower shelf, and on all temples was inscribed:

TO GOD AUGUSTUS THE BEST AND THE GREATEST

If one will visit the oldest churches in Europe, in many of them one will find the inscription, cut in the pavement or elsewhere:

TO GOD THE BEST AND THE GREATEST

These words are expressed by three letters, D O M, which mean in Latin,

DEO OPTIMO MAXIMO

The Christians eliminated Jupiter and they eliminated Augustus, but they left God. If we were to eliminate God today we should get the formula:

TO THE BEST AND THE GREATEST

Does that cover all the ground? Does that represent the farthest limit to which we can think, feel, reason, and aspire?

In Galilee, where Jesus lived, the ruler was Herod the Tetrarch, placed in office by Augustus. Herod had disposed of John the Baptist, a man who had stirred up the Jews, a trouble-maker for Herod, and possibly a man who laid claim to possessing Messianic authority. Jesus had been a follower of John, and after John had made his exit Jesus seems to have

assumed his post and to have become the leader of John's followers.

Herod had moved his capital from Sepporis to a place on the shore of the lake of Galilee, called Capernaum, and he changed the name of this place to Tiberias in honor of the emperor Tiberius. In Capernaum he built a temple to Cæsar and he built another at a place called Bethsaida, and changed the name of this latter place to Julias, in honor of the emperor's daughter.

Thus, we have perhaps some explanation of the cryptical words of Jesus when he exclaimed:

"Woe unto thee, Bethsaida; and thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell!"

Jesus found some fishermen mending their nets on the pebbly shore of the lake of Galilee and he said to them: "Follow me." He was the man who knew what he wanted and consequently they followed him. He gathered together only a handful of people, but it is the handful of people, not the masses, who preside at the birth of new eras. Jesus picked up his followers one by one and he took great care in choosing them. They appear to have been in the beginning exclusively Jews, although a large percentage of the population in Galilee were non-Jews. The Romanizing process was everywhere spreading like wild-fire. Civic freedom, free houses, and other plums were being generously handed out to the Jews and others who accepted the Roman overlordship. It was all a wonderful system of graft. Roman citizenship was the greatest advantage a man could get, but the price was high. To Jesus, Satan was running a successful market to which men came to sell away their souls. The "down and outs" could get several free lunches if they would only worship a few imperial idols. Herod was an expert in running the political machine, and on one occasion Jesus so far forgot his customary politeness as to refer to Herod as "that fox." Cæsar's policy of making the people contented by giving them "bread and circuses" was carried out dexter-

ously and to the letter by Herod. Jesus said to his followers: "The first thing for us to do is to go after the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To accomplish this purpose they had to force their way into the synagogues, controlled by the Pharisees, and in open combat on the floor of the synagogues break down the arguments of the Pharisees. The latter were telling the people that they ought to "lie down and be good" under the rule of Herod because God had sent Herod and Cæsar to rule over them as a punishment for their sins. It was useless for them to kick against the judgment of God. In other words, commit more sins.

Centuries afterwards this picture was blotted out, apparently in the interests of Roman statecraft, and Jesus was represented as having been put to death "by the Jews." That was making scapegoats out of the Jews, of course. But why not? That is what Mr. Hitler is doing today in Germany—making scapegoats out of the Jews. But why not? Were not the Jews created just exactly for that purpose? However, let us just quietly pursue our task of finding the facts, following the good counsel of Newton D. Baker, who says: "Exercise the power of self-control until you know the facts."

Jesus called the Pharisees "hypocrites." Hypocrisy, the virtue of double-facedness, is not a monopoly of the Jews, but the Pharisees of that time gave an illustration of it which has become classic. The first law of Moses was: "I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them." The Pharisees were side stepping this law. Rome was giving prosperity to the people—plenty of automobiles for the gentlemen and plenty of fur coats for the ladies. Therefore, "lie down and be good" under Rome. Rome had everybody throttled, except Jesus. The beliefs of the masses could be molded like putty, and the Pharisees handled the putty and Cæsar handled the Pharisees. The Pharisees were handing God over to Cæsar and God became Cæsar's best asset in politics. God did not like what was

being done to him and that explains Jesus. Where did Jesus get his cunning and his power? He got the force out of himself to do his work. He knew what he wanted. It was not possible for him to side step. The Pharisees were authoritarians. They worshiped authority. Theirs was the complex which acts only in obedience to orders from some human superior. It gives orders to those below and takes orders from those above. The idea of service for the love of service is beyond its ken. The Pharisees once asked Jesus: "By whose authority are *you* acting?" Jesus replied: "I will ask you a question and if you will answer it I will answer your question. Did John's baptism come from men or from heaven?" The Pharisees were looking for converts among the people and John had been a sort of "tribune of the people," a man of great popularity. If John's baptism came from men it would look foolish, but to say that it came from heaven would be blasphemy. Therefore the Pharisees decided that they had better not lose converts or get into political trouble by answering the question, whereupon Jesus said: "Neither will I tell you by whose authority I act."

Jesus did not deal with Cæsar. He never mentioned Cæsar's name but once, and then in answer to a question. He dealt with Satan, and with Satan he made no compromise. Some men are able to voice the ideas of their time, and Jesus is probably the greatest example of that power in history. From the moment he accepted leadership he knew that he was outside the law. He knew that he need expect no quarter and no mercy. Whatever free speech we enjoy today we owe largely to him. We owe him that debt, and they who forget it are ungrateful. The blows which he delivered were terrible, and before them his enemies staggered and reeled. His tongue, like a blade of tempered steel, cut down the lies, the shams and the hypocrisy of that age.

"How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus did not answer the question. He saw before him the Roman law of majesty, and his time was not yet come. He had

the shrewdness to keep out of traps and the inherent sincerity to keep out of the path of sin. He practiced what he preached. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone."

A man he was of one idea who, once his resolution taken, went straight to his object. The priests who shouted out for his blood, before Pilate, said: "We have no king but Cæsar." They are forgotten and he is remembered. In that picture we see a bully, a tyrant from overseas with a drawn sword, standing over a crushed and pounded mass of humanity. But against the darkness and desolation of that hour another form stands out—in solemn loneliness, in grand pity, in immense sadness, in a beauty and dignity that have never faded. He is the record of what a man can do who draws his strength from within and from himself.

Despotism always brings the moral dregs of society to the top of the social order. What existed then was chaos with money at the top of it. Beginning with Augustus, the Romans extended their aristocracy to all the provinces, including Palestine. This aristocracy consisted of two ranks, senators and equestrians, otherwise called knights. The qualification for the aristocracy was money alone. Family descent, or pedigree, was cut entirely out of the picture. Under Augustus money became supreme. To qualify for being a senator a minimum fortune of 1,200,000 sesterces was needed. To qualify for equestrian rank, a minimum of 400,000 sesterces was needed. Rank was shown by dress. The senator wore a toga with a broad purple border. The equestrian wore a toga with a narrow purple hem. Pilate was an equestrian. The chief priests in Jerusalem, as everywhere else throughout the Empire, wore the toga with either the broad or the narrow purple hem, according to their wealth. Jesus referred to this privilege when he denounced them before the people because they "made broad the hem of their garments." As a man increased his wealth he gave up the narrow hem and assumed the broad hem. One peculiar privi-



lege enjoyed by equestrians, a privilege of ancient Roman origin, was the right to levy a tax on widows, which they did not turn over to the public exchequer, but put into their own pockets. Here again Jesus hits them when he says: "They devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayer." What angered Jesus was that these priests, "wearing long robes of purple and fine linen" and devouring widows' houses, were "sitting in the seat of Moses." To him they were usurpers, traitors. Another privilege enjoyed by those of the "priests and rulers" who were clothed with Roman citizenship and wearing the aristocratic purple was complete immunity from taxes, a privilege accorded to all persons in their position throughout the Empire. It was the function of the equestrians (through their underlings) to collect the tribute but not to pay it. The paying of taxes in those days was regarded as a mark of servitude. Men of senatorial rank had the privilege of being escorted by a bodyguard of soldiers. Pilate tells us that the priests had a "guard" at their disposal. In the Greek language of those days the word "phylactery" meant a bodyguard of soldiers. In later times this word came to have a different meaning. At the time when Jesus came up to Jerusalem for the Passover the priests were augmenting or "making broad" their bodyguards, to protect themselves against any uprising of the people. They had at their command cohorts of soldiers and military tribunes. The Passover season in Jerusalem was one of considerable risk for the Romans. Pilate, whose usual residence was at Cæsarea, on the sea coast, came up to Jerusalem at this time, with his army, and stationed himself in the Tower of Antonia, a barracks adjoining the temple, otherwise called the prætorium. Holding these sidelights in view, the reader can perhaps get an idea of what a tremendous excitement Jesus must have produced when he delivered the following invective in the presence of the multitudes gathered together in that vast open area in Jerusalem which was called "the temple," on the eve of the Passover.

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders: but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries,\* and enlarge the borders of their

\*The gospel reads, "they make broad their phylacteries." What is to be noted here is that the English translation of the Bible does not translate into English the word "phylactery." It merely puts down the Greek word and leaves the reader to find the meaning of that word as best he can. The reader, therefore, is obliged to go to some extra biblical source of information. There are many books, dictionaries and encyclopædias, which undertake to give correct interpretations of the many obscure words used in the Bible. Much of the information is valuable, but on the other hand much is false and erroneous.

In these books the word "phylactery" is universally interpreted to mean the so-called "prayer box" used by Jews, since ancient times, when they are engaged in their religious devotions. The Hebrew word for this object is *tephillin*. It consists of a small leather box which is attached to the arm by long leather straps. Inside the box are written certain words taken from the law of Moses. In the theological dictionaries Jesus is represented as censuring the Pharisees because of their tendency to dwell on the external acts of worship and to make a vain display of piety, and the Pharisees are represented as exhibiting this vain display by "making broad their prayer boxes" or by wearing bigger prayer boxes than were customarily used by Jews who were not so pious as they were.

Such an interpretation of the meaning of Jesus would of course strike the critical minded reader as somewhat feeble. If there had been any usage among the Jews to attach importance to the size of the prayer box there would be some show of justification for the interpretation given in the dictionaries. But the records of the Jews show nothing of the kind.

The Jews of the dispersion, in the time of the Romans, came in close contact with the Greeks, and adopted their language to a great extent. The word "phylactery" did come at a later time to acquire, among the Greeks, a subsidiary meaning of "guard, charm or amulet." This meaning did not attach to it in the day of Jesus. That explains why to this day the prayer box or *tephillin* is referred to oftentimes by the Jews as a "phylactery."

But in the day of Jesus the word "phylactery" had no other principal meaning than that of "body guard," or the "garrison of a fort."

As to the Greek verb which is used in the gospel in connection with the word phylactery, that verb is *platuno*, and it meant "to deploy," or "make broad."

From this word, *platuno*, is derived the English word "platoon." Jesus was speaking of platoons of soldiers which, throughout the Empire, were customarily placed at the disposition of the imperial high priests. The false interpretation which has been given to this passage is probably not in the nature of a premeditated falsification, but is due simply to the same general accumulation of ignorance which has almost completely buried the meaning of the whole New Testament.

garments. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts [these were public feasts in honor of the emperor, where the priests had the uppermost rooms. Such rooms can be seen still in the ruins at Pompeii.] and the chief seats in the synagogues. And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi. But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your master even Christ [observe here that Jesus does not call himself Christ] and all ye are brethren.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. [These allusions to swearing relate to the oath of allegiance to the emperor which all Jews were obliged to swear. The oath was hateful to the Jews, but the governmental office-holders twisted and invented doctrines for justifying it.]

Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold or the temple which sanctifieth the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing: but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind, for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and by him that dwelleth therein.

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the

prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Under talk of that kind the spirit of the people was rising. The attack was direct and merciless. We are told that the priests were afraid of the multitudes and that is the reason probably that they were impotent to interfere with or stop this extraordinary onslaught. Jesus put the question right up to those people—to exist or not to exist as a Jewish nation, as the children of God—that was the vital question, and it became particularly vital in their eyes as the Feast of the Passover approached. It looked like the old story of Egypt and Babylon. But at the moment when the outlook is darkest comes a man of courage to show the way. He seems to bring a message from God. He speaks as “one having authority.” The voice of a prophet is again heard in Israel.

The picture of Jesus as he stands, single-handed, before the multitudes in the temple is the example of the terrific force which is at the command of a man who thinks and who says what he thinks. He is a man battling for life as against death. He can be intimidated by nothing. The multitudes, in the presence of a giant of that kind, are lifted, in a way, up to his own level. He is not playing to any herd psychology, but to something far deeper. He liberates and calls into action the deepest feelings that lie dormant within them. They respond to what he says in the way in which a copper wire will respond to a current of electricity. He reaches to the bottom or the top of whatever it is that they are as men. The multitudes recognize a master. The multitudes are looking upon a man who is clothed with the majesty and dignity of self-respect. He is telling them with a resistless logic to respect themselves, and in every man lies the ultimate primordial purpose of making himself the object of his highest respect. The multitudes feel that they are in the presence of “authority”—the highest authority which they can recognize on earth because they themselves are par-

takers and partners in it—and in a figurative or spiritual sense they fall down and worship it.

The hairsplitting with regard to swearing the oath of allegiance, of which Jesus gives such a wonderful picture, is probably not intelligible to us at the present day. But what is distinctly intelligible are the words of Jesus when, in another situation, he said: "I say unto you, swear not at all."

Under the Empire, the oath of allegiance was sworn by people of all ranks and conditions, all nations and religions. It was a religious as well as a political formality. A Roman swore by whatever, in his religion, was most sacred to him. A Greek, a Gaul, a Spaniard, an Egyptian, or a Jew was obliged to do likewise. An oath to Cæsar was no profane or commonplace affair. It was an oath meant to bind the person who took it—bind his soul and conscience—bind him in the deepest regions of his religious belief. Therefore the Roman swore by Jupiter, or by heaven. The worship of the emperor was not a religion thrust down the throats of the various nations by force. The Gentile nations accepted it spontaneously. It exactly suited the size of their brains. We see here working the law of religious determinism. They were living under a religious spell and Jesus broke that spell in such a way that all those Gentile nations could move on to something better. In this sense he did a real and lasting service to humanity. Something came down out of the stratosphere, and it came down through Jesus, and he conducted it to others.

The oath to Cæsar was always sworn on the first day of January. It was attended with sacrifices, the burning of incense and a "sacred supper" in which the priests ate the best part of the food, the choicest delicacies. The whole event was a big show, surrounded with the greatest pomp and ceremony. There was a procession at the head of which marched the high priest clad in purple and wearing his golden crown. The high priest offered the sacrifices and pronounced the prayers.

The Jews generally rebelled against taking the oath, but

the Pharisees were "compassing sea and land" to make "prose-lytes" and converts, among the Jews of the dispersion, to their way of looking at things. Paul had worked with them in the beginning, but quit them after having had some kind of a psychological experience on the road going up to Damascus.

Jesus was counter checking the Pharisees on the question of the oath. His language was, on this subject, explicit and unequivocal:

But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: nor by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil [Satan].

Jesus pronounced this discourse (the Sermon on the Mount) to people whom he called "the salt of the earth." That was complimentary to them because it meant that they were as good as anybody else. He then argues that "if the salt have lost his savour" it is "henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." In other words, the Jew who had lost his self-respect was in a despicable condition. Then he tells the people that they "are the light of the world." If they are the light of the world it is because they possess a source of illumination which the Gentile nations do not possess. The Gentile nations are glorifying another Father. If these people in Galilee are the light of the world, they must "let your light so shine before men (namely, the Gentiles) that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Here was common sense for the Galileans. It was not an impossible utopia. They saw a man before them that was equal in size to David or Moses. They listened with rapt attention to this young Galilean who without sword or shield called in question the divinity of the foreign ruler. There was nothing about the ideas of Jesus which was conspicuous for being "meek and lowly." In his most dynamic moments, we see him always armed for a conflict, ready for his enemy, ready to ride on the

crest of the whirlwind. Jesus said: "Love your enemies." He was here a poor example of what he preached. Jesus hated his enemies. He had an anger like a withering fire. He was not bubbling over with love for the men whom he called "vipers and children of hell."

When these unfortunate "vipers" found out that they were being so magnificently hated, what happened?

"The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ."

What Jesus really said, and what is above criticism, was: "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." That is a much better and a much stronger statement of the general philosophy of Jesus than his statement: "Love your enemies." It is possible perhaps not to have enemies, but if one is unfortunate enough to have enemies, the magnetic connection can never be one of love. A man like Jesus who inspired tremendous love also inspired tremendous hate. The only solution of such a human deadlock appears to reside in the fact that half the world loves the true and the beautiful, while the other half hates it.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

Here we have "ravening wolves" added to the "vipers" and human serpents. After the most sublime and beautiful passages, in which we are told to love others more than they love us, to turn the other cheek to them that smite us, to walk two miles with a man who asks us to go only one, to give away two coats to him who asks only for one—after all this generosity and altruism we must still be on our guard because some men are ravening wolves while others belong to various categories of snakes.

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Jesus had no riches, so that it was easy for him to get in.

Jesus was human.

## X

### WHO WAS MESSIAH?

WHAT is back of the man who is able to conquer the world with a pleasant smile? We cannot tell what it is in words, but it is the same indefinable something which has given to the words of Jesus an undying freshness long after the outline of the man who uttered them has been more or less washed out by the lapse of time. His words smile on the world today. The attitude of Jesus to every question was critical and original. He cannot be put into the class with the communists or the socialists or the radicals, and yet he was a thoroughgoing communist, socialist and radical. He belonged to no party. He was no partisan. He founded an era and he stands alone. His originality defies all classification. We might say of him that he was the founder of the world's Critical Club. His words are repeated over and over in churches to multitudes of people who can get no glimpse of the real man who spoke them or of what he was standing for. The radicals are against him because they think he is a prop supporting a defunct and useless ecclesiasticism. Conservatism is against finding out who he really was, because if that were found out the discovery would be a prop to radicalism.

But the historian just goes quietly about his task. He gets rid of the baggage of theology, he knocks away this or that barricade, he drills back to the facts.

Christianity came into the west. It came among peoples who were polytheists and even among lower down peoples who were scarcely above the level of human sacrifice. It softened by slow stages the rudeness of the savage. It converted full-fledged polytheists into partial monotheists. But the man who was at the head of all this began to fade out. Human personalities,



even the most heroic, pass away. As the outline of the founder grew fainter and fainter the spread of Christianity came slowly to a standstill. The founder became a myth. The great propaganda for Christianity practically ended one thousand years ago. Yet, the words of the founder to his followers were: "Go and tell all peoples. Weld all peoples into one people." Perhaps the outline of that founder will never be recovered. But should it be recovered it will be a triumph for science and for progress.

The idea of being the Messiah was apparently suggested to Jesus by others. It was something dictated by the force of circumstances. The germination of this idea in the mind of Jesus was not spontaneous. He was the soul of personal humility and never set himself above other men. In the first place, John the Baptist had practiced the rite of baptism, and it was plain that this baptism of John came from heaven. That made John's baptism Messianic. John was acting as Messiah when he administered a baptism which came from heaven. Then, unexpectedly, John's career was cut short. His followers, among whom apparently was Jesus, were presented with a new situation. They lamented the death of John, but they had not the least idea in the world of abandoning the movement which John had started. But where was the Messiah? Then people turned to Jesus and said: "You must take the lead." Now Jesus was the kind of man who would not back out from a work to which he had once put his hand. "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

The "rising from the dead" was a sign of Messiahship. The ordinary individual did not "rise from the dead." When Herod the Tetrarch heard about the activity of Jesus he said: "This is John the Baptist. He is risen from the dead." Herod thought that he had got rid of the Messiah and here before him was the Messiah, in the shape of Jesus, "risen from the dead."

When the gospels came to be written, the gospel writers were confronted with a serious difficulty. They could not put John into the limelight as having been the Messiah because that

would disparage Jesus. Yet John had played the part of Messiah, and this fact could not be wholly obliterated. Consequently the gospels make such statements as the following: "John truly baptized with water," but Jesus baptized with something which was supposed to be better. "John did no miracle," but Jesus did miracles. Not being able to dispose wholly of John's Messiahship, the gospel writers represented him as holding a position a little lower down. He became the Forerunner or the Precursor of the Messiah. What difference did it make to Jesus whether John were the Messiah or he, Jesus, were the Messiah? None whatever. If Jesus carried the Messiahship, he carried it as he would have carried a sword, seized from the hand of a fallen comrade, with which to fight a battle. Jesus was quite willing to share Messianic honors with John. He speaks of John as a "burning and a shining light." Again he says: "Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Or again, "What went ye out for to see, a reed shaken with the wind? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you and more than a prophet."

It was an act of unwavering defiance on the part of Jesus to seize immediately the post left vacant by John. He snapped his fingers at Herod, the man who had put John to death. Death electrifies some men, and the death of John electrified Jesus. He said: "Fear not those who kill the body." No utterance could have been more daring and more defiant.

The three men who originated, developed and exploited what may be called the Messianic legend were John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul. All three died at the hands of the Romans. All three violated Roman law. The law violated was always the same, the *lex majestas*, the law of majesty. John was the founder of the legend, not Jesus. He undertook to bring men back to God, to purge them by the rite of baptism, a rite which John invented. Jesus took the legend from the hands of John. Paul developed and propagated the doctrine by which it was to survive, persevere, and conquer in the world.

## XI

### THE FRAME UP BEFORE PILATE

“For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

IF the death of Jesus were regarded by the authorities in Jerusalem as expedient for reasons political or otherwise, why was it that Pilate pronounced Jesus to be innocent and manifested a desire to save his life? Pilate pronounced Jesus innocent and then straightway condemned him to death. Was Pilate sincere? The gospels give an impression which is somewhat favorable to Pilate. When Herod the Tetrarch put John to death, Herod said he was “sorry.” Later on, another Herod, named Agrippa, stretched forth his hand to “vex” certain of the church. He killed James, the brother of Jesus, and then “because he saw it pleased the Jews,” he took steps with the intention of treating Peter in the same vexatious manner. Here we have three Roman-appointed governors who seem to have pushed off responsibility for what they did onto the shoulders of somebody else.

Jesus predicted that he and his followers should be brought before kings and governors, but when they are brought before the kings and governors the latter seem to be “sorry.”

What is known about Pilate? The *Encyclopædia Britannica* gives certain facts. It says, briefly, that: He was closely connected with the household of Tiberius and came in 26 A.D. to govern Judea, Samaria and Idumea. He stayed there ten years and quarreled almost continually with the Jews. In 36 A.D. he was recalled. Before he reached Rome Tiberius died, and Pilate then disappeared from history. As procurator, his headquarters was at Cæsarea. On one occasion he attempted by

night to force the military standards, bearing the image of the emperor, into Jerusalem. This nearly precipitated a revolution and Pilate was obliged to yield. At another time he hung up in Jerusalem shields carrying the imperial emblems and inscriptions, but was later ordered by Tiberius to take them back to Cæsarea. On another occasion he caused to be killed certain Samaritans who came to Mount Gerizim to dig up certain sacred vessels supposed to have been hidden there by Moses. This incident led to his recall. Another event was his attempt to use the money amassed in the treasury of the Jewish temple for the purpose of building an aqueduct for Jerusalem. This led to a revolutionary demonstration. Pilate ordered his soldiers to disguise themselves and mingle among the mob. The soldiers, using their clubs, dispersed the demonstration. The gospels tell us that Pilate, in dealing with certain *insurrectos* in Galilee, mingled their blood with their sacrifices. It enraged Pilate to have any Jew make an appeal from him to Cæsar. Philo called Pilate "inflexible, merciless, obstinate."

From this we infer: Pilate did the best he could for the emperor. He wanted to do something for the health of Jerusalem by constructing an aqueduct for the conveyance of clean water. He took the position that the Jews ought to pay for this improvement, to which they objected. [Clean, fresh water never came into Jerusalem until nineteen hundred years after, when Lord Allenby, an Englishman, belonging to a ruling race, built water pipes into Jerusalem.] We learn further that an unknown number of Jews in Jerusalem were Roman citizens, because none but such could have a right to appeal from Pilate to Cæsar.

What is known about Caiaphas? We go to the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, under article "Annas and Caiaphas," and learn: In 6 A.D. the Roman governor Quirinius appointed Annas to the office of high priest. The latter held office until 15 A.D., when the Roman Valerius Gratus arrived as procurator. Gratus gave the office in succession to three Jews, each holding the office

for one year. The second of these three, Eleazar, was a son of Annas. In 18 A.D. Gratus appointed Joseph Caiaphas high priest and the latter held the office continuously till 36 A.D. Caiaphas was a son-in-law of Annas. This *Encyclopædia* says: "His long term in office shows that in his relations with the Romans Caiaphas must have been obsequious and adroit." He was president of the sanhedrin. He rent his clothes.

From this we learn: The Jewish people had nothing to do, officially, with the high priests. The latter were appointed by and represented Rome, not the Jews. The high priests in Jerusalem were appointed or reappointed annually, according to the custom of appointing high priests of Augustus in every part of the Empire.

The "rending of clothes" was a Roman political custom, and common throughout antiquity. Augustus and other Romans were continually "rending" their clothes when events did not take place according to their wishes. Why is Annas mentioned in the Johannine gospel as having a hand in the proceedings against Jesus? According to the Roman law, a man who had once held the office of high priest continued to be a life member of the *concilium* or sanhedrin.

Preachers have often pointed out the "weakness and cowardice" of Pilate because he sought to wash his hands of the evil consequences of his own acts. Pilate was no weakling and no coward. The cowardly judge falls in quickly with the view taken by the crowd. He is afraid to have an opinion of his own. He will find damaging evidence against the prisoner where there is no evidence if he thinks that the mob wants the prisoner convicted. He will not see the damaging evidence if the mob wants the prisoner acquitted. Pilate did not act in this way. Pilate declared over and over that the prisoner was innocent. Then he committed him to death.

Pilate said to Jesus:

Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?

These were words of firmness.

Jesus did not flinch. Not one word passed his lips. Then Pilate continued:

Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?

This was false. The chief priests were not "the nation," nor with the nation. The trial of Jesus took place on or about April 15, year unknown. On the evening of April 14 (corresponding to the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of Nisan) he ate the Passover with his followers in Jerusalem. That was the first day of the Jewish Feast of the Passover, the official time of the Feast beginning at sundown. This Feast was kept in solemn memory of the deliverance of the Jews from the hands of the Egyptians. It was, in the beginning, commemorated by the slaying and eating of the paschal lamb. In those early days, each family was to kill a lamb, sprinkle its blood on the lintel, roast the flesh and eat it in haste. At a later period it became the custom for each family to kill its lamb at the national sanctuary in Jerusalem, and for the blood to be sprinkled on the altar of the temple. This custom made it necessary for every male Israelite, who was the head of a family, to appear in Jerusalem at the temple on the evening of the 14th of the month of Nisan.

Jesus came to that Feast. He thereby showed his fidelity to the most sacred tradition of the Jews. He said once:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Jesus came to Jerusalem to fulfill the law. The Passover Feast meant something to Jesus. It was sacred to his "Father." It was sacred to the freedom of Israel.

Pilate was on hand with his army, to put down any disturbances. Herod the Tetrarch, too, was there with his "men of war." Herod and Pilate were coöperating.

Josephus tells us that at this season as many as 3,000,000 people were concentrated in Jerusalem. This is foolish. The

figures of Josephus are generally absurd. Judging from the circumference of the old walls, Jerusalem was a small place, which might accommodate somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 people, not more. The Jews there were unarmed. The Romans kept one legion (6,000 men) in Jerusalem, ample for any emergency. Their barracks adjoined the temple area, where disturbances customarily broke out.

The Romans had converted the temple into barracks for soldiers and governmental offices. It had been entirely Romanized. New buildings had been put up according to Roman ideas. There were splendid accommodations for the high priests of Augustus and their soldiers. Matthew gives us the picture :

And Jesus went out and departed from the temple : and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things ? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

The plan decided upon by Jesus was to carry his propaganda before the "convocation of the people" which would take place on Friday, the 15th of Nisan, in the temple area. The strategy of the authorities however was to foil Jesus in the carrying out of this plan. Of this situation the gospel record gives us glimpses in such passages as the following : They sent officers to take him : Jesus hid himself : He escaped out of their hand : They took counsel together to put him to death : They gave order that if any knew where he was he should make it known, so that they might take him : These things spake Jesus and departed and hid himself.

It was a situation of armed neutrality between the authorities and the "multitudes"—armed, at least, on the side of the authorities. What held the authorities in check was fear of the masses. "We fear the people." Caiaphas did not wish to raise a tumult. He avoided any overt aggressive action "lest there be an uproar among the people." The safe and effective step would be to arrest Jesus "in the absence of the multitude."

Then Caiaphas got in touch with Judas. Pilate could not act because here was a case of "blasphemy," not a case of armed revolt, and blasphemy fell under the jurisdiction of the high priest, whose primary duty it was to defend from injury the majesty of the emperor. Throughout the Empire the functions of the high priest were always the same, conducting the sacrifices to the emperor, presiding over the meetings of the council, and a strict enforcement of the law against blasphemy.

Josephus tells us in his book called the "Jewish War," that "the Jews offered sacrifices twice every day for the emperor and the Roman people." He tells us in the same book that the immediate cause of the Jewish War which broke out in 66 A.D. was because "the priests rejected sacrifices on behalf of the emperor and the Romans generally. And though many of the high priests begged the Jews not to omit the customary sacrifices in honor of the emperor," the Jews could not be persuaded to continue the sacrifices. That was in 66 A.D., some thirty years or more after the time with which we are dealing.

Caiaphas therefore was the official sacrificer and the defender of the emperor's dignity.

Pilate knew nothing officially about the law against blasphemy in the sense that it was not his official business to institute any enforcement of that law. He could only act on an initiative taken by the high priest. The latter acted as the state's prosecuting attorney. His duty was to make an arrest, collect the evidence and produce the prisoner before Pilate together with the evidence. It then became the duty of Pilate as a judge to decide the case on the evidence submitted, and pass sentence in accordance with his decision.

The brothers of Jesus in Galilee urged him to go up to the Feast and to "show himself to the world." Jesus started. He was followed by great multitudes. He entered and passed through Jericho. In Jerusalem excitement was running high. Not only Jews, but Greeks also, wanted to see and hear Jesus, the mighty agitator from Galilee, the man who knew how to



talk. Crowds gathered everywhere and were asking: "What think ye, that he will not come to the Feast?"

Arrived in Bethphage, Jesus sent forerunners ahead to carry to Jerusalem the news of his arrival. He entered the city riding on an ass. The crowds could not restrain their enthusiasm. They shouted: "Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." They paid no attention to the fact that it was not in accordance with Cæsar's laws that a person should enter Jerusalem riding on an ass, "in the name of the Lord." Men in a crowd will do bravely oftentimes what they will not dare to do singly. Jesus went directly to the temple and found there those that sold oxen and sheep and doves. This was a degradation of the temple. The degradation of the temple was of course only a minor part of the degradation of Israel, under which Jesus was smarting. It was customary throughout the Empire to sacrifice oxen and especially doves on the imperial altars. What happened?

And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence.

He was not a "meek and lowly" Jesus at that time. Such bold acts always have a contagious effect. The spirit of the people was rising. A tempest was brewing.

Jesus did not spend the night in the city. He went out to Bethany, some three miles eastward. The following day he came back to the temple. He then and there hurled his invectives before the people. He rode the crest of the whirlwind. Fear, if he ever had any, had left him. He wielded a weapon which no other man could wield, and striking with that weapon blow after blow upon the vipers who had sold out their God and their country he reached the pinnacle of his magnificent courage.

Even an unbeliever, a skeptic, a freethinker, or a Jew must admit that Jesus was possessed of an unusual courage. If Jesus made "mistakes," it was not when he whipped the money-

changers out of the temple, and said: "Take these things hence."

The story about the arrest and what followed is so well known that it scarcely has need of repetition here. But there are a few points that are somewhat confused in the public mind. The proceeding in the house of Caiaphas was not a trial, as has been generally supposed. It was a "third degree" proceeding—looking for evidence—except there was no torture, other than hitting him in the face and spitting in his face. Jesus had no idea of immolating himself. His plan was to capture Jerusalem. He was betrayed. He kept himself out of reach of arrest, but one of his followers turned against him, for money, and tipped off to Caiaphas where he could be found at night. Jesus was tracked. In the Garden of Gethsemane (which is a considerable distance outside the city) those with Jesus were told off to stand "watch." Somebody slept at the switch. Jesus was on the cross sometime between eleven and twelve o'clock in the morning of Friday, the 15th of Nisan.

The secret about Pilate is simply that he was a good Roman. Like all Romans holding power, he looked down on the Jews with considerable contempt. He used Caiaphas, but had contempt for him. For Jesus he had more respect.

Pilate was not a traitor to Rome, but the priests were traitors to Israel. That gave Pilate some moral advantage over the priests in the eyes of the early Christians, and that point of view has been written into the gospels. But Pilate was a good Roman, and the law being plain, Pilate did what he did. Jesus was dignified before Pilate, whereas the latter was accustomed to deal with roughnecks and other characters who were not quite so dignified. Pilate may have had a vague feeling that he was dealing with some invisible power which he did not quite understand. Accustomed by his professional calling to being hard-boiled, the bearing of Jesus before him perhaps left an impression on his mind which he never forgot. Jesus was silent, and the power of silence may be at times as great as, or greater than, the power of words. Pilate may perhaps not have been

too bad a fellow at bottom, making allowances for the nature of his profession; but, but, but there was Caiaphas shoving the letter of the Roman law under his nose.

Pilate knew that Jesus was a communist, but he also knew that Jesus was not a roughneck. There is a difference, then as now.

Pilate could not understand a "king of the Jews" who was following the command of Moses: "Thou shalt not kill."

Here was a paradox for Pilate.

However, since it seemed best, on the whole, to "bump off" the prisoner, or the paradox, Pilate decided to make a good job of it. He turned him over to a rabble of soldiers who cuffed him and mocked him, and then Pilate wrote a somewhat sarcastic inscription and caused it to be affixed to the cross, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews."

All for "reasons of state"! With what nice and respectable deviltry are crimes committed for "reasons of state"! Yet we all like the state. We all stand back of the state. The state is Christian, or at least we think it is. Perhaps we are making a mistake.

Pilate was a governor, and he was helped by the Pharisees.

The world has seen many "governors" since then. All of which reminds us how easy it is for any man sitting in a governor's chair, backed up by social and academic Pharisees, to snuff out, by the legal operation of laws, the lives of obscure and helpless men, "for reasons of state"—and nobody knows anything about it. The proverb is true that history repeats itself.

The chief priests mocked at the foot of the cross, saying, "He trusted in God; let God deliver him now."

Towards the end, Jesus, in the agony of death, exclaimed: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

There, certainly, was convincing proof of a man who was *human*, if any there be who still ask for proof on that subject.

The proceeding that took place in the prætorium was not a "frame up" of Jesus. The trial and death of Jesus were per-

fectly legal. But the proceeding that took place in the prætorium was a frame up against the soul force of humanity. Caiaphas, by reason of having been connected with Jesus, obtained a certain reflected fame to which he was not entitled. If heaven ever existed, it certainly never existed for him.

Caiaphas was *par excellence* the type of the *bad Jew*. The king with the crown of thorns was the type of the good Jew.

Jesus was a martyr, and a martyr fascinates the whole world. If it were not for the instinctive love of justice which lives in those who are possessed of any nobility, he would have been forgotten long ago. He fought for a cause, and he set up a sign-board for all people who think that they are called upon to battle for causes. He is the example of the difference which will always exist between the will power fighter and the fighter who resorts to physical force to win a cause. War, generally speaking, is a rotten business. It produces a certain number of third-class heroes. Men will go to war and tear themselves to pieces on the battlefield. They may get, they may not get, what they want. The issue of physical force is always uncertain. Jesus got what he wanted, and he knew that what he wanted could never be obtained by slaughter.

Today the world is in a convulsion of hate, a fit of besotted delirium tremens, brought on by getting drunk with too much material "prosperity." Gog and Magog are blowing up their bellies, and waving their flags, and marshalling their armies for battle. The tiger of war is thirsting for another blood-bath. But the lesson of history is that blood is power only when it is the blood of martyrs. They who are opposed to war, if there are any, should take a hint from Jesus. The first thing for them to do is to cut free from Gog and Magog. The second is for them to study the technique of the martyr.

## XII

### WHAT NEXT?

JESUS was the Son of God. What did that mean? It meant that if one said anything like that one was in danger of losing one's life. When Pilate nailed up Jesus to the cross he did something else. He nailed up the coffin of the old era. A new era was born, and it was called the Christian era. For about two hundred and fifty years men and women were giving their blood for the new era. The formula which they pronounced before the Roman judges was always the same: Jesus is the Son of God. That broke down the Roman Empire. Jesus knew it would. That now is a closed incident.

Today we are far removed from those times. They are no longer understood today. In the busy marts of Chicago and New York, who longer thinks about what happened then? Nobody. The story, the old, old story, is dead and lost. We press on to conquer the future and leave the past to bury itself. Nothing is left of Jesus but a myth, and myths will not get New York and Chicago out of the depression or drive the wheels of industry. Some say that we need a new ethics, a new religion. But anything like that is costly. It requires blood to make a new religion. Few are ready, even among the radicals, for the process of blood transfusion. Many are ready to take blood, few or none to give it. Therefore, not having the blood to give, we shall be obliged to content ourselves with the old religion, or else get on without any. Or else we can invent a new superstition which will be less expensive, in terms of blood, than a new religion.

Jesus started a religion because he knew what he wanted. Is there anybody today who knows what he wants? Nothing will ever be done until people know what they want.

There is perhaps one idea that might start a new religion.

It is the idea of welding all peoples into one people. The idea looks beautiful on paper, but how far do we want it? How much will we pay for it? If we want it, by what line of action do we propose to get it? Jesus stands before us as a man who took the right line of action and not the wrong line of action to get what he wanted.

How are we going to weld a Christian into a Hindu or a Hindu into a Christian? Or how are we going to weld both of them into that which will be neither Christian nor Hindu? Jesus got something out of the past. We refuse to get anything out of the past. Jesus saw his enemy and found a line of resistance to his enemy. We have not yet begun so much as to consider whether we have any enemy, or who he is or what he is, or what we are going to do to fight him after we have found him.

Is there anything we can salvage from Jesus? No. Because we cannot salvage much out of a myth, and we have an ingrained indifference and repugnance to investigating the past. The Americans are not a myth-loving people. Our brains go into the manufacture of automobiles and flying machines and our greatest thrill in life is to side step the past.

The writer of this book is not a salesman for Catholicism, but he knows what its historical meaning and value are. It arose from the birth-pains that brought the human race out of polytheism into monotheism. But we today do not like birth-pains. Birth-control has done away with birth-pains. Modern science is making everything painless. What we want is painless progress. Religion is a painful progress. The Jews were monotheists and consequently there was no need for them to go into the Catholic church. Their historic mission was to preserve a legend of their own, and they are still preserving that legend in the teeth of obstacles and persecution and hatred. They live alone in the midst of a world made up of modernists and side steppers and their anchorage is in the past. They have reverence for the past and they are succored, in the midst of hatred and

persecution, by the memory of the past. The purpose of this book is to be a good will book—good will to the Jew, the Hindu, the Christian, the unbeliever—and the first task of good will is to break down all lines of demarcation that operate against good will, such as:

The modern world hates Jesus because he was a dreamer and a Jew.

The Jews hate Jesus because he founded Christianity.

The Germans hate the French and the French hate the Germans.

The Pope is still praying in Rome. We do not ask the Pope to stop praying, but we ask him to give us the facts as they were. It is and has been his business and duty to preserve those facts in his archives. If he cannot give us those facts, then of what use or help is the Pope to us?

Man has been following God ever since Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees. But now God, too, is becoming a myth. God and Jesus are disappearing into mythology. They do not get us out of the "world economic crisis" or turn the wheels of industry. God no longer visits justice upon the heads of biased judges, pig-headed juries, "framers" of innocent men, and other successful and respectable criminals, "unto the third and fourth generation." God and Jesus have been fixed and boxed and nailed up so that wrongdoers can run the world just about as they choose.

But a little more of the honey of history before winding up this book. After the Christians, in a heroic manner, had persisted for approximately two hundred and seventy-five years in committing the legal blasphemy involved in saying or "confessing" that Jesus was God or the Son of God, they won a victory and the persecutions stopped. Blasphemy, in the old form, came to an end when Constantine, by the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., recognized the legality of the church. Cæsar, as God, was by the Edict of Milan, indirectly but definitely buried, and without any honors. Jesus had been dead at that time ap-

proximately two hundred and seventy-five years, and his outline was already growing a little shady. Books were rare and costly, and anything like a science of history, such as the Christians could avail themselves of, did not exist. The books and records of the Christians had been, of course, destroyed as completely as the Roman authorities were able to destroy them. After the persecutions followed a breathing spell. The Christians, in a dazed and exhausted condition, looked back, and they began to wonder and ask questions about the terrible ordeal through which they had passed. During those two hundred and seventy-five years they had had no time for philosophical or theological speculations. Their energy had been concentrated at one point and on one question: Did they have the will power to face persecution? Did they have the will power to stand up before the Roman judges and say: "You may kill me, but you cannot break my will. I believe in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God." They had started the church\* on the communistic basis, and they had fought their way to victory with the slogan that Jesus was the Son of God. Then a new problem presented itself. The sun of *Theology* mounted up over the eastern horizon, and asked the question: How was Jesus the Son of God? Nobody had thought about this point before because it was simply not im-

\*A confusion exists in the minds of many Christians with regard to the word "church." One hears sometimes people speak of the "Jewish church" or the "Hindu church." There never existed a Jewish or a Hindu church. There is but one church, and that is the one established by Jesus and his followers. They did not invent the idea of a "church" out of whole cloth. They borrowed it, as they borrowed many things, from the Greeks. In the old Greek cities, the word "church," *ecclesia*, had nothing to do with any particular religion or religious cult. It was primarily a political or civic institution, and can be likened to the "town meeting" of early New England days. It was the meeting of free citizens, in the agora or market-place, convened for the purpose of voting the laws. The Roman authority forbade any club, organization or society of people which did not receive the official permit of Rome. The church, therefore, with its very first breath, was a deliberate and audacious defiance of the Roman laws. It was a cell formation, a boring from within, which the Roman law regarded from the beginning as treasonable.



portant to the business in hand. But suddenly they found themselves in a new world. Politics, too, came into the church because Constantine, the emperor, had become a Christian. Many of the Christians were opposed to the Empire taking over the church, and were asking: "What has the church to do with the emperor?"

These various questions were brought to a focus in the Council of Nicæa which convened in 325 A.D. Constantine controlled this Council, sitting, clad in purple, upon a throne of gold. This was not exactly suggestive of Jesus. However, Jesus had won a victory. That was admitted on all sides. Jesus had been a great man. If Jesus could have been there, Constantine would doubtless have given him a seat beside himself on the golden throne, and Jesus would doubtless have been given the honor of signing the Nicene Creed with his own hand. But now the serious question came up at Nicæa: How was Jesus God? The Council was rent in twain on this terribly crucial point. Two mighty leaders appeared, Athanasius and Arius. Athanasius (who was backed by Constantine), held that Jesus was one hundred per cent God. Arius held that Jesus was between forty-five and fifty per cent God. Athanasius, being backed by Constantine, won the victory, and Arius was solemnly declared a heretic. Arius would not go lower than the forty-five-fifty per cent limit, because the people would not stand for it, and to do so would seem to be lacking in loyalty to Jesus. Still, Arius, although he had an immense following, was declared a heretic, and his doctrines up to this day have never been permitted in the Catholic church.

The Roman Catholic church was founded on the historic slogan that Jesus was the Son of God, one hundred per cent, and when that church gives up that slogan it will cease to be the Roman Catholic church. Its attitude on this point is clear and unequivocal: "Do not think about this question, but believe." The cardinal virtue of the Catholic church is not enlightened intellectualism but unreasoning consistency. In this

it has served its purpose faithfully. Catholics are not intellectuals. If they were, they could not stay in the church. Intellectualism went into Protestantism. Jesus was an intellectual, according to his time, and, therefore, if we wish to follow him we are obliged to follow the Protestant trail. Jesus will never be found through the trail of Catholicism. Protestantism was founded not by Luther but by Arius. Arius was the first Protestant. He claimed the right to think, and he was fighting for the Jesus of history.

Constantine, in the interests of Roman statecraft, wished to abolish the Jesus of history. The diplomatic way in which to reach that goal was to switch responsibility for the death of Jesus off from the Romans onto the whole Jewish nation, and to represent henceforth Jesus as being one hundred per cent God. That would be to establish *Theology*, and with theology established, the Jesus of history would disappear, and the old Roman state would be safe. The church and the state would live on together in a kind of loving brotherhood but, according to Constantine's brilliant plan, the state would always have the whip hand. Jesus, as a disturbing political factor, would be forever silenced. Certainly, there had been political excitement enough, and it was time for the human race to take a rest, and a good long one. Therefore, Constantine, clever wire-puller and state-manager that he was, put a quietus on Jesus, and that quietus has existed up to the present day. The Nicene Creed saved the Roman state, but it destroyed Jesus. That document was the second crucifixion of Jesus. The latter being destroyed, the way was open, in later times, to build up the Holy Roman Empire, which ultimately gave birth to the Hohenzollerns, the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons, and other spawn of lesser importance.

Christianity is a wedge, and every wedge has a thin edge, and if we wish to follow the direction in which the wedge is going we must follow it at the thin edge. The thin edge of the wedge today is represented by Unitarianism, the advance guard

of Protestantism. The broad end of the wedge is the Pope. Unitarianism has a thin edge and it also has an abstract Pope at the other end, and the broad end of the Unitarian wedge is the papal or conservative end. Every sect has its Pope.

But now we are following the thin edge of the Unitarian wedge and we come to a little baby whirlpool called "humanism." The humanists get out six times a year a cocky little magazine called *The New Humanist*, the circulation of which is so pathetically small that the author of this book was obliged to hunt around in Boston for two days before he could discover where it was sold. He ultimately was lucky enough to hit the trail of *The New Humanist*, from which he learned that the humanists had lately promulgated before the world a "Manifesto." Here we have a church with a Pope in Rome at one end, who issues manifestoes, and at the other end a little tornado of humanists, who issue manifestoes from Chicago. People who think that the church is in a moribund condition should sit up and take notice of what is being done in the world.

The humanist manifesto, or encyclical, is based on the following thesis: "Why insist on God?" Now here is a question that is vital to all of us who do any thinking at all about the mystery of life. The Pope insists on God, and if he did not do so, there would not be the slightest reason for his remaining a Pope. I am going to take the Pope's side on this question. If God is outside of us, insisting or not insisting on him is not going to make much difference to him. We cannot change anything by insisting one way or the other. I love to be modest and to avoid expressing my own personal point of view, but my own personal point of view about God is just this: Wherever there is a sublime man, there is a sublime God. I do not insist on God. If God exists I cannot help it. If God does not exist I cannot alter that situation. I am sure that man exists. How do I know this? Because, being normal myself, by which I mean that I feel that I am normal—I am without any feeling of being abnormal—and having this normal feeling, I feel like

a man. I enjoy the unmistakable human feeling. Does that make me a humanist? Not at all. Why? Because humanism, one would infer, relates to human beings—otherwise known as humanity—a distinct biological species—and it would seem to bar out all being not related to the human category. Humanism bars out extra-human relations. There are probably all kinds of interesting extra-human relations open to us if we care to go after them. For instance, there are the spirits. I do not say that I am a spiritualist, but I want a road left open for me to go to them, and for them to come to me, if they want to come, and if they do actually exist. I do not wish to shut myself up in a human shell, with a sign on the outside of it: "Private property, please keep out." Humanism, therefore, is not cosmic. It is local and egocentric, and seems to assume or affirm, in a rather saucy manner, that there is no being in the cosmos other than what is human. Humanism would seem to imply that the biological phenomenon which we call humanity is paramount to every other form or grade or plane of being that may exist in the universe or beyond the universe. In originating a philosophy we ought to take in all possibilities. For this reason humanism is frightfully unscientific. It is almost as unscientific as Christian Science. Humanism is a good religion or ethic for those people who are content to be human molecules on this planet and who do not care for any extended life elsewhere. But how about other planets and other spaces? How about the life on the stars? Do we know that it is or is not human? How about the spirits that may inhabit the ether? Do we know that they are or are not human? Therefore, it is best to leave room for others. It is safer and more scientific to follow the words of Jesus: "In my Father's house are many mansions." Jesus was cosmic and scientific. A philosophy, to hold water, must be cosmic. Neither does humanism pay sufficient attention to this planet and what exists on this planet. It pays no attention to such important and beautiful forms of life as we see in the horse, the dog, the bird, the deer. George Eliot said once that

the more she saw of men the more she liked dogs. How about the dog and the horse and all the other good, gentle animals that once went into the ark with Noah? Do we not pet our horses and dogs and love them as children? Man is no more, no less, than the highest of the mammals. Humanists should be scientific, and not too sentimental about men, just because they themselves happen to be men. Look into the eyes of a faithful dog. Will you despise him? He knows whether you are a "humanist" or not. So far as these semi-human companions of man are concerned, humanism, in my modest opinion, is a hot-air philosophy. I do not relish the rôle of being a mentor for others, but I can say this to the humanists, if it would help them: Sit down and study the A B C of the English language. By doing this you will learn how to choose the words which correspond to, and square with, your ideas, many of which are good and fine. Humanism is almost perfect, but it has one flaw. It leaves God out of the picture.

Therefore, we must give up camouflaging the gospels, and we must stop playing up Man as the biggest gun in a universe concerning which we know little or nothing.

What about the future? Is the church finished? No. The church is in its babyhood. But a church which contains only Christians is too small. The Christian church is probably finished, or at any rate on the last lap of its long journey. The church and the Christian church are different. One is finishing while the other is only beginning. The Christian church today is not a force but a record, and its record on the whole, in my opinion, has been highly honorable, and often heroic. Where are we to cast our anchor? Shall we cast it into the future or into the past? Those who favor casting it into the future will find that there is no bottom to the future sufficiently solid to hold an anchor. We do not know about the future, but we know about the past. Let the future take care of itself. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Therefore, we must cast our anchor into the part of the universe which has been explored,

where the anchorage is solid. Before we can construct the new we must interpret the old and anchor to it. Then we shall have the house that "is anchored, not on the sands, but on a rock." When Jesus lived, the highest power was in heaven. Today the highest power for us is not in heaven but in us. That is the bedrock of a faith that can be militant. That is the bedrock dogma which will be voted in the first Œcumenical Council of the "new deal." That is the bedrock of a fighting church that will stand, to the last ditch, for Man, a fighting church which shall embrace all peoples, all races, all countries. Nothing in the mind of man can be created by force. Man is a creature who yields only to reason. By reason he seeks "the straight and narrow way" that leadeth unto life, and by reason he avoids the broad road that leadeth to destruction. Such a church will be a League of Peoples, not a League of Governments, not a League of Diplomatic Pigtales; and such a church will require saints, for, if history can be believed, the saint pays the price, in blood, or in some other legal tender, or illegal tender, for the helplessness, the superstition, the ignorance and the slowness of the masses. The multitudes cannot receive what the saint understands. Therefore it was said: "Let him receive it who can receive it." The man who used those words was fighting against Ancient Graft, and he showed to a few what the multitudes could not at first understand. The all-embracing church of the future, founded on a rock, will break the back of Modern Graft, and nothing else will break it. It is sure to come, for nothing good in the life of man is lost.

How about divinity? Have we got done with divinity? Perhaps yes; perhaps no. But we have got done with weak divinity. To the Christian, Jesus is the link with divinity. What did Jesus do? He gave to the proletariat a strong divinity with which to fight graft. Graft in his day was being hedged by divinity, but when the deadly conflict came, Jesus showed that he possessed the strong and the Unconquerable God. That was a long time ago, and man has grown too big for the particular

ideas which fitted and were appropriate to those times. Religion is the rope by which man is forever drawing himself upward, to the top of the universe. To pull himself up even a small distance on the rope he must be a hero. The Christians were heroes. The evolution of man is not a matter of chemistry, but of heroism. But to say today that Jesus was God, to express divinity in that archaic form, is to express something which is entirely devoid of that heroic quality which attached to those words in the mouths of Saint Cyprian, Saint Cecilia, Saint Clement, Saint Catherine and Saint Calixtus. It is no longer a living or heroic form of belief. There are three systems—the two master system, the one master system and the no master system. The last named is the heroic system, but to practice the “no master” system a man must be a complete and absolute master of himself. Jesus has been a tower because he held up before men the ultimate goal of men, which is self-mastery, the goal of the hero.

Ever since man began, the guiding thought of the religious man has always been the same: “Can I *do* something for humanity?” Today we all know that graft is on top. Graft is on top, either in peace or in war. Jesus called graft Satan. He waited for his chance to strike Satan and then he struck him. Back of Jesus, and in his soul, was a strong and conquering divinity. His God said: “Let there be peace.” Go into the catacombs in Rome and you will find carved on the tombs of the martyrs one word: *Pax*. Reader, if you are a pacifist, find out something about the history of pacifism. Only in that way will you ever become strong in that logic which will render whatever you may say unanswerable. How is it today? When the next war breaks out we shall see, as we saw in the last military explosion, that “God” is claimed by both sides. We do not have to wait to see it. We see it already. God is made an adjunct to the flag. The trouble is not with the flag but with God. We see a poor kind of God, a weak, helpless, flabby divinity. A God who can be made an adjunct to fifty different

kinds of flags, a God that can be cut up into fifty pieces, is a God that belongs in a museum of historical curiosities. The church belongs to God, not to the flag.

In Germany, Hitler has got the Lutheran church under his thumb. He is thinking of taking Jesus out of the Lutheran prayer book and replacing him with Woden, who was a pure Aryan-German. Hitler has put God into a strait-jacket. If we watch, we shall see Mr. Hitler very shortly retire to his bedroom, take off his brown shirt and pants, go to bed, and give birth to a Nordic God.

If we turn to Italy, we shall find a similar picture. We shall find Mr. Mussolini saying to the Pope: "I rule here, not you." The people in those countries sincerely and devoutly believe that the church represents a link with divinity. But what kind of a divinity is it that will submit to such insulting treatment from Mr. Hitler and Mr. Mussolini? Is it a strong, conquering divinity or is it a weak, contemptible divinity? Mr. Hitler and Mr. Mussolini represent *the omnipotence of the state*. Omnipotence is an attribute of God, and a God who is not omnipotent is no God. The German dictator and the Italian dictator are usurping the place that belongs to Omnipotence and to Majesty. A God that is a God is a dictator, and he will not be dictated to by any man or any nation of men. The German dictator, with his "Aryan" slop, and the Italian dictator, with his "Roman Empire" bluster, are helpful object lessons for the sober, educated, intelligent people of other countries. We would politely suggest to His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Italy, that he write, over the doorway of his palace, the words of his illustrious compatriot, Dante: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

We have read in the newspapers of the "Society of the Godless" in Moscow. It is not in Moscow. The real "Society of the Godless" is putting on a show, not in Moscow, but in Berlin and Rome, and, with our opera glasses, we can see just what is being done.



Now we have got our finger on the sore spot. Now we can see man's enemy. The *omnipotence of the state* is the enemy of man and the enemy of the omnipotent God. The omnipotence of the state is the adversary of that God who "works salvation" not only in the midst of the earth but in the midst of the universe, and whose throne is not in heaven but in the breast of man. The omnipotence of the state is the modern Satan and, if followed, will lead humanity to hell.

As the nature of this book is historical, perhaps the best way to bring it to a close is to quote a piece of poetry out of a distant age, based on a religion now obsolete, but still interesting to the archæologist as a fragment of an age now forgotten:

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

And one of the elders answered, saying, What are these that are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

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I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers and murderers, and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.





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